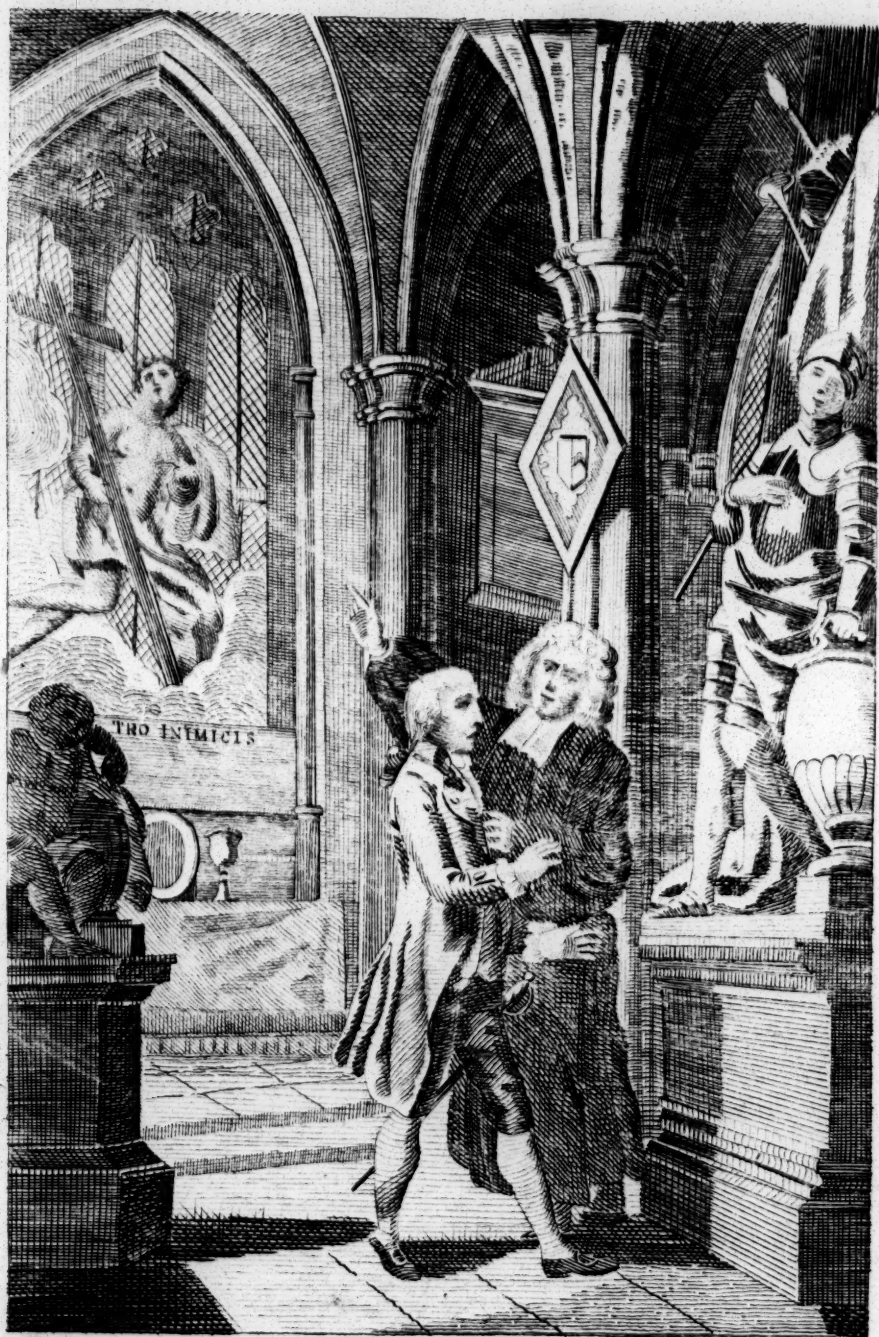




He gave Himself a Ransom for All.

Nicholson del.

Bull sculp.

Price Bound 6/6.

MEDITATIONS

AND

CONTEMPLATIONS

In Two VOLUMES

Containing

VOL. I.

*Meditations among
the Tombs.
Reflections on a
Flower Garden:*

VOL. II.

*Contemplations on
the Night.
Contemplations on
the Starry Hea-
vens:*

By JAMES HERVEY, A.M



*When I consider thy Heavens the Work of thy Fingers;
the Moon and the Stars which thou hast ordained?
Lord what is Man that thou art mindful of him, and
the Son of Man that thou visited him. Psalm VIII. v. 3. & 4.*

Dublin, Printed by J. FLEMING, for the United
Company of Booksellers 1792.



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P R E F A C E.

TH E first of these occasional Meditations begs leave to remind my readers of their *latter end*; and would invite them to set, not their houses only, but, which is inexpressibly more needful, their souls, in order: That they may be able, through all the intermediate stages, to look forward upon their approaching exit, without any *anxious apprehensions*: And, when the great change commences, may bid Adieu to terrestrial things, with all the *calmness* of a chearful resignation, with all the *comforts* of a well-grounded faith.

The other attempts to sketch out some little traces of the *all-sufficiency* of our *Redeemer*, for the grand and gracious purposes of everlasting salvation; that a sense of his unutterable dignity, and infinite perfections, may incite us to regard him with sentiments of the most profound *veneration*; to long for an assured interest in his merits, with all the ardency of *desire*; and to trust in his powerful meditation, with an *affiance* not to be shaken by any temptations, not to be shared with any performances of our own.

I flatter myself, that the thoughts conceived among the *Tombs* may be welcome to the serious and *humane* mind; because, as there are few, who have not consigned the remains of some dear *Relations*, or honoured friends, to those silent repositories; so there are none, but must be sensible, that this is the *house appointed for all living*; and that they themselves are shortly to remove into the same solemn mansions.—And who would not turn aside, for a
b while,

while, from the most favourite amusements, to view the *place*, where his once-loved *companions* lie? Who would not sometimes survey those *apartments*, where he *himself* is to take up an *abode*, till time shall be no more?

As to the other little essay, may I not humbly presume, that the very subject itself will recommend the remarks? For, who is not delighted with the prospect of the blooming creation, and even charmed with the *delicate attractions* of flowers? Who does not covet to assemble them in the Garden, or wear them in a Nosegay? since this is a passion so universal, who would not be willing to render it productive of the sublimest improvements;—This piece of *holy frugality*, I have ventured to suggest, and endeavoured to exemplify, in the second letter: that, while the hand is cropping the transient beauties of a flower, the attentive mind may be enriching itself with solid and lasting good.——And I cannot but entertain some pleasing hopes, that the nicest taste may receive and relish *religious impressions*, when they are conveyed by such *lovely monitors*; when the instructive lessons are found, not on the leaves of some formidable *Folio*, but stand legible on the fine *sarcenet* of a *Narcissus*; when they favour not of the *lamp* and *Recluse*, but come breathing from the fragrant bosom of a *Jonquil*.

MEDITATIONS

AMONG THE

T O M B S.

IN A LETTER TO A LADY.

MADAM,

TRAVELLING lately into Cornwall, I happened to alight at a considerable village, in that county; where, finding myself under an unexpected necessity of staying a little, I took a walk to the church. The doors, like the Heaven to which they lead, were wide open; and readily admitted an unworthy stranger. Pleased with the opportunity, I resolved to spend a few minutes under the sacred roof.

IN a situation so retired and awful, I could not avoid falling into a train of meditations, serious and mournfully pleasing. Which, I trust, were in some degree profitable to me, while they possessed

B

and

and warmed my thoughts; and, if they may administer any satisfaction to you, madam, now they are recollected, and committed to writing, I shall receive a fresh pleasure from them.

It was an antient Pile; reared by hands, that, ages ago were mouldered into dust.—Situatè in the centre of a large burial ground; remote from all the noise and hurry of tumultuous life.—The body spacious; the structure lofty; the whole magnificently plain. A row of regular pillars extended themselves through the midst; and supported the roof with simplicity, and with dignity.—The light, that passèd through the windows, seemèd to shed a kind of luminous obscurity; which gave every object a grave and venerable air.—The deep silence, added to the gloomy aspect, and both heightened by the loneliness of the place, greatly increased the solemnity of the scene.—A sort of religious dread stole insensibly on my mind, as I advanced, all pensive and thoughtful, along the inmost isle. Such as hushèd every ruder passion, and dissipated all the gay images of an alluring world.

HAVING adored that eternal Majesty, who, far from being confinèd to temples made with hands, has heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool.—I took particular notice of a handsome altarpiece, presentèd, as I was afterwards informèd, by the master-builders of Stow*; out of gratitude, I presume, to that gracious God, who carried them through their work, and enabled them to “bring forth their top-stone with joy.”

O! how amiable is Gratitude! especially when it has the Supreme Benefactor for its object. I have
always

* The name of a noble seat, belonging to the late earl of Bath; remarkable formerly for its excellent workmanship, and elegant furniture; once the grand resort of the quality and gentry of the west; but now demolishèd, laid even with the ground, and scarce one stone left upon another. So that corn may grow, or nettles spring where Stow lately stood.

always looked upon gratitude, as the most exalted principle, that can actuate the heart of man. It has something noble, disinterested, and (if I may be allowed the term) generously devout. Repentance indicates our Nature fallen, and Prayer turns chiefly upon a regard to one's self. But the exercises of gratitude subsisted in Paradise, when there was no fault to deplore; and will be perpetuated in heaven, when "God shall be All in All."

The language of this sweet temper is, "I am unspeakably obliged: what return shall I make?"—And, surely, it is no improper expression of an unfeigned thankfulness, to decorate our Creator's courts, and beautify "the place where his honour dwelleth." Of old, the habitation of his feet was glorious; let it not, now, be sordid or contemptible. It must grieve an ingenuous mind, and be a reproach to any people, to have their own houses wainscotted with cedar, and painted with vermilion; while the temple of The LORD of Hosts is destitute of every decent ornament.

HERE I recollected, and was charmed with Solomon's fine address to the Almighty, at the dedication of his famous Temple. With immense charge, and exquisite skill, he had erected the most rich and finished structure, that the sun ever saw. Yet, upon a review of his work, and a reflection on the transcendent perfections of the Godhead, how he exalts the one, and abases the other!—The building was too glorious, for the mightiest monarch to inhabit; too sacred, for unhallowed feet even to enter; yet infinitely too mean, for the Deity to reside in. It was, and the royal worshipper acknowledged it to be, a most marvellous vouchsafement in uncreated excellency, to "put his name there." The whole passage breathes such a delicacy, and is animated with such a sub-

limity of sentiment, that I cannot persuade myself to pass on without repeating it. “* But will God indeed dwell on earth? Behold! the Heaven, and Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain Thee; how much less this House that I have builded?—Incomparable saying! Worthy the wisest of men. Who would not choose to possess such an elevated devotion, rather than to own all the glittering materials of that sumptuous edifice?

We are apt to be struck with admiration, at the beautiful grandeur of a masterly performance in Architecture. And, perhaps, on a sight of the ancient sanctuary, should have made the superficial observation

* 1 Kings viii. 27. But will—A fine abrupt beginning, most significantly describing the amazement and rapture of the royal prophet's mind!—GOD: he uses no epithet, where writers of inferior discernment would have been fond to multiply them: but speaks of the Deity, as an incomprehensible being, whose excellency is exalted above all praise.—Dwell: To bestow on sinful creatures a propitious look, or favour them with a transient visit of kindness, would have been an unutterable obligation: will he then vouchsafe to fix his abode, and take up his stated residence among them?—Indeed: A word, in this connexion, exceedingly emphatical; expressive of a condescension, wonderful and extraordinary almost beyond all credibility.—Then a most important reason is suggested for the preceding admiration: Behold: Intimating the continued, or rather the increasing surprize of the speaker, and awakening the attention of the hearer.—Behold! the Heaven: The spacious concave of the firmament, that wide-extended azure circumference, in which worlds unnumbered perform their revolutions, is too scanty an apartment for the God-head.—Nay, the Heaven of Heavens: Those vastly higher tracts, which lie far beyond the limits of human survey, to which our very thoughts can hardly soar; even those (unbounded as they are) cannot afford an adequate habitation for Jehovah; even these dwindle into a point, when compared with the infinitude of his essence; even these “are as nothing before him.”—How much less proportionate then is this poor diminutive speck, which I have been erecting and embellishing, to so august a presence, so immense a majesty.

vation of the Disciples, “ what manner of stones, and what buildings are here?”—But what a nobler turn of thought, and juster taste of things, does it discover, to join with Israel’s King, in celebrating the condescension of the divine Inhabitant! That the high and lofty One, who fills immensity with his glory, should, in a peculiar manner, fix his abode there! should there manifest an extraordinary degree of his benedictive presence; permit sinful mortals to approach his Majesty, and promise “ to make them joyful in his house of prayer!”—This should more sensibly affect our hearts, than the most curious arrangement of stones can delight our eyes.

NAY the everlasting GOD does not disdain to dwell in our souls, by his holy spirit; and to make even our Bodies his temple.—Tell me, ye that frame critical judgments, and balance nicely the distinction of things, “ Is this most astonishing, or “ most rejoicing?” he humbleth himself, the scripture assures us, even to behold the things that are in Heaven *. ’Tis a most condescending favour, if HE pleases to take the least approving notice of angels and archangels, when they bow down in homage from their celestial thrones: and yet will he graciously regard, will he be intimately united to poor, polluted, breathing dust?—O! unparalleled honour! invaluable privilege! be this my portion, and I shall not covet crowns, nor envy conquerors.

BUT let me remember, what a Sanctity of Disposition, and Uprightness of Conversation, so exalted a relation demands: remember this, “ and “ rejoice with trembling”—durst I commit any iniquity, while I tread these hallowed courts? could the Jewish High-Priest allow himself in any known transgression, while he made that solemn yearly entrance † into the Holy of Holies, and stood before the

* Psalm cxiii. 6.

† Heb. ix. 7.

the immediate presence of JEHOVAH? No, truly. In such circumstances, a thinking person must shudder at the most remote solicitations to any wilful offence. I should now be shocked at the least indecency of behaviour, and am apprehensive of every appearance of evil.—And why do we not carry this holy Jealousy, into all our ordinary life? why do we not, in every place, || reverence ourselves; as persons dedicated to the divinity, as living temples of the God-head? For, if we are real, and not merely nominal christians, the God of glory, according to his own promise, † dwells in us, and walks in us.—O! that this one doctrine of our religion might operate, with an abiding efficacy, upon our consciences! it would be instead of a thousand Laws, to regulate our conduct; instead of a thousand Motives, to quicken us in holiness. Under the influence of such a conviction, we should study to maintain a purity of intention; a dignity of action; and “to walk worthy of HIM,” who has called us to this most sacred union with his blessed self.

THE next thing, that engaged my attention, was the Lettered Floor: the pavement, somewhat like Ezekiel’s roll, was written over from one end to the other. I soon perceived the comparison to hold good in another respect; and the Inscriptions to be matter of “Mourning, Lamentation, and “Woe.*” They seemed to court my observation; silently

|| ————— παντων δε μαχλις' αισχυουσιν ο αυτον,
was the favourite maxim of Pythagoras, and supposed to be the best moral precept ever given to the heathen world. With what superior force, and infinite advantage, does the argument take place in the christian scheme! Where we are taught to regard ourselves not merely as intellectual Beings, that have Reason for our monitor; but as consecrated Creatures, who have a God of the most consummate perfection ever with us, ever in us.

† 2 Cor. vi. 16.

* Ezek. ii. 10.

silently inviting me to read them.—And what would these dumb monitors inform me of?—“ That
“ beneath their little circumferences, were deposit-
“ ed such and such pieces of clay, which once liv-
“ ed, and moved, and talked: that they had receiv-
“ ed a charge to preserve their names, and were
“ the remaining trustees of their memory.”

AH! said I, is such my situation? the adorable Creator around me, and the bones of my fellow-creatures under me! surely, then, I have great reason to cry out, with the revering patriarch, How dreadful is this place!† Seriousness, and devotion become this house for ever. May I never enter it, lightly or irreverently; but with a profound awe and godly fear!

“ Oh! that they were wise §!” said the inspired penman. It was his last wish for his dear people: he breathed it out, and gave up the ghost.—But what is wisdom? it consists not in refined speculations, accurate researches into nature; or an universal acquaintance with history. The divine lawgiver settles this important point in his next aspiration: “ Oh that they understood this!” that they had right apprehensions of their spiritual interests, and eternal concerns! that they had eyes to discern, and inclinations to pursue, the things which belong to their peace!—But how shall they attain this valuable knowledge? I send them not, adds the illustrious teacher, to turn over all the volumes of literature: they may much more expeditiously acquire this science of life, by considering their latter End. This spark of heaven is often lost, under the Glitter of pompous erudition; but shines clearly in the gloomy mansions of the tomb. Drowned in the gentle Whisper, amidst the Noise of mortal affairs; but speaks distinctly, in the retirements of serious contemplation.—

† Gen. xxviii. 17.

§ Deut. xxxii. 29.

contemplation.—Behold! how providentially I am brought to the School of Wisdom! * the grave is the most faithful † master; and these instances of mortality, the most instructive lessons—Come then, calm attention, and compose my thoughts; come, thou celestial spirit, and enlighten my mind, that I may so peruse these awful pages, as to “be—
“ come wise unto salvation.”

EXAMINING the records of mortality, I found the memorials of a § promiscuous multitude. They were huddled, at least they rested together, without any regard to rank or seniority. None were ambitious of the uppermost rooms, or chief seats, in the house of mourning. None entertained fond and eager expectations of being honourably greeted in their darksome cells. The man of years and experience, reputed as an oracle in his generation, was content to lie down at the feet of a babe. In this house appointed for all living, the Servant was equally accommodated, and lodged in the same story, with his Master. The poor indigent lay as softly, and slept as soundly, as the most opulent Possessor. All the distinction that subsisted, was, a grassy hillock, bound with osiers; or a sepulchral stone ornamented with imagery.

WHY then, said my working thoughts, oh! why should we raise such a mighty stir about Superiority and Precedence, when the next remove, will reduce us all to a state of equal meanness?
why

* The man how wise, who, sick of gaudy scenes;
Is led by choice to take his favourite walk
Beneath death's gloomy, silent, cypress shades,
Unpierc'd by vanity's fantastic ray!
To read his monuments, to weigh his dust,
Visit his vaults, and dwell among the tombs!

Night Thoughts.

† Wait the great teacher death.

Pope.

§ Mistra senum ac juvenum densantur funera.

Hor.

why should we exalt ourselves, or debase others; since we must all, one day, be upon a common level, and blended together in the same undistinguished dust? Oh! that this consideration might humble my own, and others pride; and sink our imaginations as low, as our habitations will shortly be!

AMONG these confused relics of humanity, there are without doubt, persons of contrary interests, and contradicting sentiments: but death, like some able days-man, has laid his hand on the contending parties, and brought all their differences to an * amicable conclusion. Here enemies, sworn enemies, dwell together in unity. They drop every embittered thought, and forget that they once were foes. Perhaps, their crumbling bones mix, as they moulder: and those who, while they lived, stood aloof in irreconcilable variance; here fall into mutual Embraces, and even incorporate with each other in the grave——Oh! that we might learn from these friendly ashes, not to perpetuate the memory of injuries; not to foment the fever of resentment; nor cherish the turbulence of passion: that there may be as little animosity and disagreement in the land of the living, as there is in the congregation of the dead!—But I suspend for a while such general observations, and address myself to a more particular inquiry.

YONDER white stone, emblem of the innocence it covers, informs the beholder of one, who breathed out its tender soul, almost in the instant of receiving it.—There, the peaceful infant, without so much as knowing what labour and vexation mean, “† lies still and is quiet; it sleeps and is at
“ rest.”

* “Hic Motus Animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta,
Pulveris exigui Jactu compressa quiescent.”

Virg;

† Job iii. 13.

“rest.” Staying only to wash away its native impurity in the laver of regeneration, it bids a speedy adieu to time, and terrestrial things.—What did the little hasty sojourner find, so forbidding and disgusting in our upper world, to occasion its precipitant exit? ’tis written, indeed, of its suffering Saviour, that when he had tasted the vinegar mingled with gall, he would not drink †: and did our new-come stranger, begin to sip the cup of life: but, perceiving the Bitterness, turn away its head, and refuse the Draught? was this the cause, why the wary babe only open’d its eyes; just looked on the light; and then withdrew, into the more inviting regions of undisturbed repose.

O! fortunate voyager; that was no sooner launched, than arrived at the Haven ‡!—But more happy they, who have passed the waves, and weathered all the storms of a troublesome and dangerous world; who, “thro’ many tribulations, have entered into the kingdom of heaven;” and thereby brought Honour to their divine convoy, administered Comfort to the companions of their toil, and left an instructive Example to succeeding Pilgrims.

O! happy probationer! accepted without being exercised! it was thy peculiar privilege, not to feel the slightest of those evils which oppress thy surviving kindred; which frequently fetch Groans from the most manly fortitude, or most elevated faith. The arrows of Calamity, barbed with anguish, are often fixed deep in our choicest comforts. The fiery darts of Temptation, shot from the hand
of

† Matth. xxvii. 34.

‡ Happy the babe, who privileg’d by Fate
To shorter labour, and a lighter weight,
Receiv’d but Yesterday the gift of breath,
Order’d to-morrow to return to death.

of hell, are always flying in showers around our integrity. To thee, sweet babe, both these distresses and dangers were alike unknown.

CONSIDER this, ye mourning Parents, and dry up your tears. Why should you lament, that your little-ones are crowned with victory, before the sword was drawn, or the conflict begun?—perhaps, the supreme disposer of events foresaw, some inevitable Snare of Temptation forming, or some dreadful Storm of Adversity impending. And why should you be so dissatisfied, with that kind Precaution; which housed your pleasant plant, and removed into shelter a tender flower, before the thunders roared; before the lightnings flew; before the tempest poured its rage?—O remember! they are not lost, but “taken away from the Evil to come.”*

AT the same time, let Survivors doomed to bear the Heat and Burden of the Day, reflect, for their encouragement, that it is more honourable to have entered the lists, and to have fought the good fight, before they come off conquerors. They, who have borne the Cross, and submitted to afflicted providences, with a cheerful resignation; have girded up the loins of their mind, and performed their master's Will, with an honest and persevering fidelity:—These, having glorified their Redeemer on earth, will, probably, be as Stars of the first Magnitude in heaven. They will shine with brighter beams, be replenished with stronger joys, in the LORD's everlasting kingdom.

HERE lies the grief of a fond mother, and the blasted expectation of an indulgent father.—The Youth grew up, like a well-watered plant; he shot deep, rose high, and bid fair for manhood: but just as the cedar began to tower; and promised,
ere

* Isa. lvii. 1.

ere long, to be the pride of the wood, and prince among the neighbouring trees;—behold! the axe is laid unto the root; the fatal blow struck; and all its branching honours tumbled to the dust.—And did he fall alone? O! no: the hopes of his father that begat him, and the pleasing prospects of her that bare him, fell, and were crushed together with him.

DOUBTLESS, it would have pierced one's heart, to have beheld the tender parents, following the breathless boy, to his long home: perhaps, drownded in tears, and all overwhelmed with sorrows, they stood, like weeping statues, on this very spot.—Methinks, I see the deeply distressed mourners attending the sad solemnity; how they wring their hands, and pour floods from their eyes!—Is it fancy! or do I really hear the passionate Mother in an agony of affliction, taking her final leave of the Darling of her soul? Dumb she remained while the awful Obsequies were performing; dumb with grief, and leaning upon the partner of her woes. But now the inward anguish struggles for vent; it grows too big to be repressed. She advances to the brink of the grave. All her soul is in her eyes. She fastens one more look upon the dear doleful Object, before the pit shuts its mouth upon him. And as she looks, she cries;—in broken accents, interrupted by many a rising sob, she cries, —“Farewel, my son! my son! my only beloved! “would to God I had died for thee!—farewel, “my child! and farewel, all my earthly happiness!—I shall never more see good in the land “of the living.—Attempt not to comfort me— “I will go mourning all my days, till my grey “hairs come down with sorrow to the grave.”

FROM this affecting representation, let parents be convinced, how highly it concerns them to cultivate the Morals, and secure the immortal interest
of

of their children.—If you really love the offspring of your own bodies; if your bowels yearn over those amiable pledges of conjugal endearment; O! spare no pains; give all diligence, I intreat you, to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition “of the LORD.” Then, may you have joy in their life, or consolation in their death. If their Span is prolong’d; their unblameable and useful conduct will be the staff of your age, and a balm for declining nature. Or, if the number of their years be cut off in the midst, you may commit their remains to the dust, with much the same comfortable expectations, and with infinitely more exalted views, than you send the survivors to Places of genteel Education. You may commit them to the dust, with cheering hopes of receiving them again to your arms, inexpreibly improved in every noble and endearing accomplishment.

’Tis certainly a severe Trial; and much more afflictive, than I am able to imagine; to resign a lovely blooming Creature, sprung from your own loins, to the gloomy Recesses of Corruption: after having been long dandled upon your knees; united to your affections by a thousand ties of tenderness; and now become, both “the delight of your “eyes,” and support of your family: to have such a one torn from your bosom, and thrown into darkness; doubtless, it must be like a Dagger in your hearts.—But O! how much more cutting to you, and confounding to the child, to have the soul separated from God: and for shameful Ignorance, or early Impiety, consigned over to a place of eternal torment! how would it aggravate your distress, and add a distracting Emphasis to all your sighs, if you should follow the pale corpse with these bitter reflections!——“This dear creature, though “long ago capable of knowing good from evil, “is gone out of the world, before it had learned
“ the

“ the great design of coming into it. A short-
 “ lived, momentary existence, it received from me ;
 “ but no good instructions, no holy admonitions,
 “ nothing to further its well-being in that everlast-
 “ ing state, upon which it is now entered. The
 “ poor Body is consigned to the coffin, and car-
 “ ried out to consume away, in the cold and silent
 “ grave. And what reason have I to suppose,
 “ that the precious Soul is in a better condition ?
 “ May I not justly fear, that, sentenced by the
 “ righteous Judge, it is going, or gone away, into
 “ the pains of endless punishment ?—Perhaps,
 “ while I am bewailing its untimely Departure,
 “ it may be cursing, in outer darkness, that ever
 “ to be deplored, that most calamitous Day, when
 “ it was born of such a careless, ungodly parent,
 “ as I have been.”

NOTHING, I think, but the gnawings of that
 worm which never dies, can equal the anguish of
 these self-condemning thoughts. The Tortures of
 a Rack must be an easy suffering, compared with
 the Stings and Horror of such a Remorse.—How
 earnestly do I wish, that, as many as are intrusted
 with the Management of Children, would take
 timely Care to prevent these intolerable scourges
 of conscience ; by endeavouring to conduct their
 minds into an early Knowledge of Christ, and a
 cordial Love of his truth !

ON this hand is lodged one, whose sepulchral
 stone tells a most pitiable tale indeed ! Well may
 the little Images, reclined over the sleeping ashes,
 hang down their heads with that pensive Air !
 None can consider so mournful a story, without
 feeling some touches of sympathizing concern.—
 His Age twenty-eight ; his death sudden ; himself
 cut down in the Prime of life, amidst all the vi-
 vacity and vigour of Manhood ; while “ his
 “ breasts were full of milk, and his bones moist-
 “ tened

“tened with marrow.”—Probably, he entertained no apprehensions of the evil hour: And indeed, who could have suspected, that so bright a Sun should go down at Noon? To human appearance, his hill stood strong: length of days seemed written in his sanguine countenance: he solaced himself with the prospect of a long, long series of earthly satisfactions.—When, lo! an unexpected stroke descends! descends from that mighty arm, which “overturneth the mountains by their roots; and crushes the imaginary hero, * before the Moth;” as quickly, and more easily, than our fingers squeeze such a feeble fluttering insect to death.

PERHAPS, the nuptial Joys were all he thought on—Were not such the breathings of his enamoured soul? “Yet a very little while, and I shall possess the utmost of my wishes: I shall call my charmer mine; and, in her, enjoy whatever my heart can crave.”—In the midst of such enchanting views, had some faithful friend but softly reminded him of an opening grave, and the end of all things: how unseasonable, would he have reckoned the admonition; and how impertinent, the person that administered it! Yet, though all warm
with

* Job iv. 19. לפני פני—Ad instar, ad modum, Tineæ.—I retain this interpretation, both as it is most suitable to my purpose, and as it is patronized by some eminent commentators: especially the celebrated Schultens. Though I cannot but give the preference to the opinion of a judicious friend, who would render the passage more literally, “Before the Face of a Moth:” making it to represent a creature so exceedingly frail, that even a moth, flying against it, may dash it to pieces.—Which, besides its closer correspondence with the exact import of the Hebrew, presents us with a much finer image of the most extreme imbecility. For it certainly implies a far greater degree of weakness, to be crushed by the feeble flutter of a feeble creature, than only to be crushed as easily as that creature, by the hand of man.—The French version is very expressive and beautiful; *a la Rencontre d'un Vermisseau*.

with life, and rich in visionary bliss, he was even then tottering upon the brink of both.—O! dreadful vicissitude! to have the bridal * Festivity turned into the funeral Solemnity. O! deplorable misfortune! to be shipwrecked even in the haven! and perish in sight of happiness!—What a memorable proof is here of the Frailty of Man, in his best Estate! Look, O! look on this monument, ye Gay and Careless! attend to this date; and boast no more of to-morrow.

Who can tell, but the Bride-maids, girded with gladness, had prepared the marriage-bed? had decked it with the richest covers, and dressed it in pillows of down? When——oh! trust not in youth, or strength, or in any thing mortal; for there is nothing certain, nothing to be depended on, beneath the unchangeable God—death, relentless death, is making him another kind of bed in the dust of the earth. Unto this he must be conveyed, not with a splendid procession of joyous attendants; but stretched in the gloomy Hearse, and followed by a train of mourners. On this he must take up a lonely lodging, nor ever be released, “till the heavens are no more.”——In vain does the consenting Fair-one put on her ornaments, and expect her spouse. Did she not, like Sisera’s mother, look out of the lattice: chide the delays of her beloved; and wonder “why his chariot was so long in coming?” little thinking, that the intended
Bridegroom

* A distress of this kind is painted in very affecting colours by Pliny in an Epistle to Marcellinus: “O triste plane acerbumque Funus! O Morte ipsa Mortis Tempus indignius! Jam destinata erat egregio Juveni; jam electus Nuptiarum Dies; jam nos advocati. Quod Gaudium quo Mœrore mutatum est! Non possum exprimere Verbis, quantum Animo Vulnus acceperim, quum audiui Fundanum ipsum (ut multa luctuosa Dolor invenit) præcipientem, quod in Vestes, Margaritas, Gemmas, fuerat erogaturus, hoc in Thura, & Unguenta, & Odorea, impenderetur.”

Plin. Lib. v. Epist. 26.

Bridegroom had for ever done with transitory things! That now everlasting cares employ his mind, without one single remembrance of his lovely Lucinda!—Go, disappointed virgin! Go, mourn the Uncertainty of all created blifs! Teach thy soul to aspire after a sure and immutable Felicity! For the once gay and gallant Fidelio sleeps in other embraces; even in the icy arms of death! forgetful, eternally forgetful, of the world—and Thee.

HITHERTO, one is tempted to exclaim against the King of Terrors, and call him capriciously cruel. He seems, by beginning at the wrong end of the register, to have inverted the laws of nature. Passing over the couch of decrepid age, he has nipped Infancy in its Bud; blasted Youth in its Bloom; and torn up Manhood in its full Maturity. —Terrible indeed are those Providences, yet not unsearchable the counsels:

For us they sicken, and for us they die*.

SUCH strokes, must not only grieve the Relatives, but surprise the whole Neighbourhood. They sound a powerful alarm to heedless dreaming mortals, and are intended as a Remedy for our Carnal Security. Such passing-bells inculcate loudly our LORD's admonition; "Take ye heed, watch, and pray; for ye know not, when the time is." — We nod, like intoxicated creatures, upon the very Verge of a tremendous Precipice. These astonishing dispensations are the kind messengers of heaven, to rouse us from our Supineness, and quicken us into timely circumspection. I need not, surely, accommodate them with Language, nor act as their interpreter. Let every one's conscience be awake, and this will appear their awful meaning——"O!

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* Night Thoughts.

with life, and rich in visionary bliss, he was even then tottering upon the brink of both.—O! dreadful vicissitude! to have the bridal * Festivity turned into the funeral Solemnity. O! deplorable misfortune! to be shipwrecked even in the haven! and perish in sight of happiness!—What a memorable proof is here of the Frailty of Man, in his best Estate! Look, O! look on this monument, ye Gay and Careless! attend to this date; and boast no more of to-morrow.

Who can tell, but the Bride-maids, girded with gladness, had prepared the marriage-bed? had decked it with the richest covers, and dressed it in pillows of down? When——oh! trust not in youth, or strength, or in any thing mortal; for there is nothing certain, nothing to be depended on, beneath the unchangeable God—death, relentless death, is making him another kind of bed in the dust of the earth. Unto this he must be conveyed, not with a splendid procession of joyous attendants; but stretched in the gloomy Hearse, and followed by a train of mourners. On this he must take up a lonely lodging, nor ever be released, “till the
“heavens are no more.”——In vain does the consenting Fair-one put on her ornaments, and expect her spouse. Did she not, like Sisera’s mother, look out of the lattice: chide the delays of her beloved; and wonder “why his chariot was so long in
“coming?” little thinking, that the intended
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C

"ye

* Night Thoughts.

“ ye sons of men, in the midst of life you are in
“ death. No state, no circumstances, can ascer-
“ tain your preservation a single moment. So
“ strong is the tyrant’s arm, that nothing can re-
“ sist its force; so unerring his aim, that nothing
“ can elude the blow: sudden as lightning, some-
“ times, is his arrow launched; and wounds, and
“ kills, in the twinkling of an eye. Never pro-
“ mise yourselves safety in any expedient, but con-
“ stant preparation. The fatal shafts fly so pro-
“ miscuously, that none can guess the next victim.
“ Therefore, be ye always ready; for in such an
“ hour as ye think not, the final summons cometh.”

Be ye always ready: for in such an hour as ye think not.—Important admonition! Methinks, it reverberates from sepulchre to sepulchre; and addresses me, with line upon line, precept upon precept.—The reiterated warning, I acknowledge, is too needful; may co-operating grace render it effectual! The momentous truth, though worthy to be engraved, on the tables of a most tenacious memory; is slightly sketched on the transient flow of passion. We see our neighbours fall; we turn pale at the shock; and feel a trembling dread. No sooner are they removed from our sight; but, driven in the whirl of business, or lulled in the languors of pleasure, we forget the providence, and neglect its errand. The impression made on our unstable minds, is like the trace of an arrow, through the penetrated air; or the path of a keel, in the furrowed wave.—Strange stupidity! To cure it, another Monitor bespeaks me, from a neighbouring stone. It contains the narrative of a poor mortal, snatched from his friends, and hurried to the awful bar; without leisure, either to take a last farewell of the one, or to put up so much as a single Prayer preparatory for the other: killed, according

according to the usual expression, by a sudden stroke of Casualty.

WAS it then a random blow? Doubtless, the stroke came from an aiming, though invisible Hand. GOD presideth over the armies of heaven; GOD ruleth among the inhabitants of the earth; and GOD conducteth, what men call Chance. Nothing, nothing comes to pass through a blind and undiscerning fatality. If accidents happen; they happen according to the exact foreknowledge, and in consequence of the determinate counsels, of Almighty wisdom. The LORD, with whom are the issues of death, signed the Warrant, and gave the high Commission: the seemingly fortuitous Disaster was only the Minister, appointed to execute the supreme decree. When the impious monarch was mortally wounded, it seemed to be a casual shot. "A certain man drew a bow at a venture*.—At a venture, as he thought; but his hand was strengthened, by an omnipotent aid; and the shaft levelled, by an unerring eye. So that, what we term Casualty, is really Providence; accomplishing deliberate designs, but concealing its own interposition.—How comforting this reflection! How admirably adapted, to sooth the throbbing anguish of the mourners, and compose their spirits into a quiet submission! How excellently suited, to dissipate the fears of godly survivors, and create a calm Intrepidity even amidst innumerable perils!

O! how thin is the Partition, between this world and another! How short the Transition, from time to eternity! The partition, nothing more than the breath in our nostrils; and the transition may be made, in the twinkling of an eye.—Poor Chremylus, I remember, arose from the diversion of a card-table, and dropt into the dwellings of darkness.—One night, Corinna was all gaiety in her spirits, all finery in her apparel,

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at

* 1 Kings xxii. 34.

at a magnificent ball: the next night, she lay pale and stiff, an extended corpse, and ready to be mingled with the mouldering dead——Young Atticus lived to see his ample and commodious seat compleated; but not to spend one joyous hour under the stately roof. The sashes were hung, to admit the day; but the master's eyes are closed in death. The chambers were furnished, to invite repose; but their lord rest in the lower parts of the earth. The gardens were planted, and a thousand elegant decorations designed; but their intended possessor, is gone down to "the place of skulls;" gone down to the valley of the Shadow of Death.

WHILE I am recollecting, many, I question not, are experiencing, the same tragical vicissitude. The eyes of that sublime being,——who sits upon the circle of the earth, and views all its inhabitants with one comprehensive glance,——even now behold many tents in affliction: Such affliction, as overwhelmed the Egyptians in that fatal night, when the destroying angel sheathed his arrows in all the pride of their strength.—Some, sinking to the floor from their easy chair; and deaf even to the most piercing shrieks of their distracted relations.——Some, giving up the ghost, as they are reclined, all alone, under the shady arbour, to taste the sweets of the flowery scene——Some, as they sail, associated with a Party of Pleasure, along the silver stream, while wine and music flow around.—Some intercepted, as they are returning home; and some interrupted, as they enter upon an important negociation.—Some arrested, with the Gain of Injustice in their hands; and some surprised, in the immediate act of Lewdness, or of Cruelty.

LEGIONS, legions of disasters, such as no Prudence can foresee, no Care prevent, lie in wait to accomplish our doom. A starting Horse may throw his rider; and at once dash his body against the stones, and fling his soul into the invisible world.

A Stack

A Stack of Chimneys may tumble into the street, and crush the unwary passenger under the ruins; or, even a Tile, dropping from the roof, may be as fatal as the fall of the whole structure.—So frail, so very attenuated is the Thread of life, that it not only bursts before the Storm, but breaks even at a Breeze. The most common occurrences, those from which we expect not the least harm, may prove the weapons of our destruction. A grape-stone, a despicable fly, may be more mortal than Goliath, with all his formidable armour.—Nay, if God give command, our very Comforts become killing. The air we breathe, is our bane; and the food we eat, the vehicle of death.—That last enemy has unnumbered avenues for his approach. Yea; lies entrenched in our very bosom, and holds his fortress even in the seat of our life. The crimson fluid, which distributes Health, is impregnated with the Seeds of Death*. Some unseen impediment may obstruct its passage, or some unknown violence may divert its course; in either of which cases, it acts the part of a poisonous draught, or a deadly stab. The body is a delicately fine machine; consisting of ten thousand parts, playing ten thousand motions; and a very small Pin taken out, may disconcert the whole frame; a single wheel clogged, may put a stop to all the vital movements.

SINCE then we are so liable to be dispossessed of our earthly tabernacle, let us look upon ourselves only as Tenants at Will; and hold ourselves in perpetual readiness, to depart at a moment's warning. Without such an habitual holiness, we are like wretches, that sleep on the top of a mast, while a horrid gulph yawns, or furious waves
rage

* As Man, perhaps, the moment of his Breath,
Receives the lurking Principle of Death.

The young disease, that must subdue at length,
Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his
strength.

Pope's Ethics.

rage below. And where can be the peace, what the satisfaction, of such a state?—Whereas, a prepared condition will inspire a cheerfulness of temper, not to be ruffled by every low vexation; and create a firmness of mind, not to be overthrown by the most threatening dangers. When the City is fortified with walls, furnished with provisions, guarded by able and resolute troops; what have the inhabitants to fear? what may they not enjoy? So, just so, or rather by a much surer band, are connected the real taste of life, and the constant thought of death.

I SAID, Our very Comforts may become killing. —And see the truth inscribed by the hand, sealed with the signet, of fate. The marble, which graces yonder pillar, informs me, that, near it, are deposited the remains of my valuable friend Sophronia; who died in Child-bed.—How often does this calamity happen! The branch shoots; but the stem withers. The babe springs to light; but she that bare him, breathes her last. She gives life, but (O pitiable consideration!) gives it at the expence of her own; and becomes, at once, a Mother and a Corpse.—Or else, perhaps, she expires in severe pangs, and is herself a tomb for her infant; while the melancholy complaint of a monarch's woe, is the epitaph for them both: The Children are come to the Birth, and there is not Strength to bring forth*.——Less to be lamented, in my opinion, this misfortune than the other. Better, for the tender stranger, to be stopped in the porch; than to enter, only to converse with affliction. Better, to find a grave in the womb; than to be exposed on a hazardous world, without the guardian of its infantile years, without the faithful guide of its youth.

THIS

* Isa. xxxvii. 3.

THIS monument is distinguished by its finer materials, and more delicate appendages. It seems to have taken its model from an affluent hand; directed by a generous heart; that thought it could never do enough for the deceased.—It seems also, to exhibit an emblematical Picture of Sophronia's person and accomplishments. Is her beauty, or more than beauty, her white-robed innocence, represented by the snowy Colour? the Surface, smoothly polished, like her amiable temper, and engaging manners: the Whole elegantly adorned, without either extravagant pomp, or sordid negligence; like her undissembled goodness, remote from the least ostentation, yet in all points exemplary.—But, ah! how vain, were all these endearing charms! how vain, the lustre of thy sprightly eyes! how vain, the bloom of thy bridal youth! how vain, the honours of thy superior birth! how unable to secure the lovely possessor, from the savage Violence of death!—How ineffectual, the universal esteem of thy acquaintance; the fondness of thy transported husband; or even the spotless integrity of thy character, to prolong thy span, or procure thee a short reprieve!—The concurrence of all these circumstances, reminds me of those beautiful and tender lines,

How lov'd, how valu'd once, avails Thee not;
To whom related, or by whom begot.
A heap of dust alone remains of Thee:
'Tis all THOU art!—and all the PROUD
shall be!*

Pope's Miscell.

YET,

* These verses are inscribed on a small, but very elegant monument, lately erected in the great church at Northampton: which, in the Hieroglyphical decorations, corresponds with the description introduced on this subject; and particularly, that it is dedicated to the memory of an amiable Woman, Mrs. ANNE STONHOUSE; the excellent wife of my worthy friend Dr. STONHOUSE: who has had the

YET, though unable to divert the stroke, christianity is sovereign to pluck out the sting, of death.

Is

the distress to see all the efforts of that healing art, to which I, and so many others, have been greatly indebted, failing in their attempts to preserve a life much dearer to him than his own

Nec profunt Domino, quæ profunt omnibus, Artes.

No longer his all-healing art avails,
But ev'ry remedy its master fails.

He has, however, sought some consolation, in the midst of this tender anguish; by teaching the sepulchral Marble to speak, at once, his esteem for her memory; and his veneration for that Religion, which she so eminently adorned; by summing up her character, in that concise, but comprehensive sentence, A SINCERE CHRISTIAN. Concise enough, to be the motto for a mourning ring; yet as comprehensive, as the most enlarged sphere of personal, social, and religious worth. For, whatsoever things are pure; whatsoever things are lovely; whatsoever things are of good report; are they not all included in that grand and noble aggregate, A sincere Christian?

The first lines, considered in such a connection, are wonderfully plaintive and pathetic;

How lov'd, how valu'd once, avails thee not;
To Whom related, or by Whom begot.

They sound, at least in my ears, like the voice of sorrow, mingled with admiration. The speaker seems to have been lost, for a while, in melancholy contemplation; suddenly breaks out into this abrupt encomium, then melts into tears, and can proceed no farther. Yet, in this case, how eloquent is silence! while it hints the universal esteem, which attended, the superiority of birth, which distinguished the deceased; it expresses, beyond all the pomp of words, the yearning affection, and heart-felt distress, of the Husband. Amidst a group of monumental marbles, which are lavish of their panegyric; this, I think, resembles that incomparable address of the painter; who, having placed round a beautiful expiring virgin, her friends in all the agonies of grief; represented the unequalled anguish of the Father, with far greater liveliness and strength, or rather with an inexpressible emphasis, by drawing a veil over his face.

If

Is not this the silent language of those Lamps, that burn; that Heart, which flames; those palms, that flourish; that crown, which glitters in the well imitated and gilded marble? Do they not, to the discerning eye, describe the vigilance of her faith;
the

If the last lines, are a wide departure from the beaten track of our modern epitaphs, and the very reverse of their high-flown compliments.

A heap of dust alone remains of Thee!

'Tis all THOU art! — and all the PROUD shall be!

they are not without their precedent, and that of the most consummate kind. Since they breathe the very spirit of that sacred elegy, in which all the heart of the hero and the friend, seems to be dissolved; How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished! 2 Sam. i. 27.—They remind the reader, of that awful lesson, which was originally dictated by the supreme wisdom; Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return, Gen. iii. 19.—They inculcate, with all the force of the most convincing evidence, that solemn admonition, delivered by the prophet; “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?” Isai. ii. 22.

That no reader, however inattentive, might mistake the sense and design of this Part of the fourth line,

'Tis ALL Thou art! —

it is guarded above and beneath—Above, is an expanded book, that seems to be waved, with an air of triumph, over the emblem of death; which we cannot but suppose to be the volume of inspiration, as it exhibits a kind of abridgment of its whole contents, in those animated words, “BE YE NOT SLOTHFUL, BUT FOLLOWERS OF THEM, WHO THRO’ FAITH AND PATIENCE INHERIT THE PROMISES, Heb. vi. 12.—Beneath, that every part might be pregnant with instruction, are those striking reflections; worthy the deep consideration of the highest proficient in knowledge and piety, yet obvious to the understanding of the most untaught reader; LIFE, HOW SHORT! ETERNITY, HOW LONG!—May my soul learn the forcible purport of this short lesson, in her contracted Span of time! and all eternity will not be too long, to rejoice in having learned it.

the fervency of her devotion ; her victory over the world ; and the celestial diadem, which the LORD, the righteous judge, shall give her at that day*?

How happy the husband, in such a sharer of his bed, and partner of his fortunes ! Their inclinations were nicely tuned unisons, and all their conversation was harmony. How filken the yoke to such a pair, and what blessings were twisted with such bands ? Every joy was heightened, and every care alleviated. Nothing seemed wanting to consummate their bliss, but a hopeful progeny, rising around them.—That they might see themselves multiplied in their little ones ; see their mingled graces, transfused into their offspring ; and feel the glow of their affection augmented, by being reflected from their children. “ Grant us this gift, said “ their united prayers, and our satisfactions are “ crowned ; we request no more.”

ALAS ! how blind are mortals to future events ! How unable to discern, what is really good ! † Give me children, said Rachel, or else I die †. An ardor of impatience, altogether unbecoming : and as mistaken, as unbecoming. She dies, not by the disappointment, but by the accomplishment, of her desire. If children are, to parents, like a flowery chaplet, whose beauties blossom with ornament, and whose odours breathe delight ; death, or some fell misfortune, may find means to entwine themselves with the lovely wreath. Whenever our souls are poured out, with passionate importunity, after any inferior acquisition ! it may be truly said, in the words of our divine master, Ye know not what ye ask.—Does providence withhold the thing that we long for ? It denies in mercy ; and only with-

* 2 Tim. iv. 8.

† Nescia mens hominum fati, fortisque futuræ !
Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum.
Intactum Palanta ; & cum spolia ista diemque
Oderit.—

‡ Gen. xxx. 1.

with-holds the occasion of our misery, if not the instrument of our ruin. With a sickly appetite, we often loathe what is wholesome, and linger after our bane. Where imagination dreams of unmingled sweets; there, experience frequently finds the bitterness of woe.

THEREFORE, may we covet immoderately, neither this, nor that form of earthly felicity; but refer the whole of our condition, to the choice of unerring wisdom. May we learn to renounce our own will; and be ready to make a sacrifice of our warmest wishes, whenever they run counter to the good pleasure of God. For, indeed, as to obey his laws, is to be perfectly free; so, to resign ourselves to his disposal, is to establish our own Happiness, and to be secure from fear of evil.

HERE, a small and plain stone is placed upon the ground. Purchased, one would imagine, from the little fund, and formed by the hand, of frugality itself. Nothing costly: not one decoration added: only a very short inscription; and that so effaced, as to be scarcely intelligible.—Was the depositary unfaithful to its trust? Or were the letters worn, by the frequent resort of the surviving family; to mourn over the grave, and revive the remembrance, of a most valuable and beloved relative?—For I perceive, upon a closer inspection, that it covers the remains of a father. A religious Father; snatched from his growing offspring, before they were settled in the world, or so much as their principles fixed by a thorough education.

THIS, sure, is the most complicated woe, that has hitherto come under our consideration. The Solemnities of such a dying Chamber, are some of the most melting and melancholy scenes imaginable.—There lies the affectionate husband; the indulgent parent; the faithful friend; and the generous master. He lies in the last extremities, and on the very point of dissolution. Art has done its
all.

all. The raging disease mocks the power of medicine. It hastens, with resistless impetuosity, to execute its dreadful errand; to rend asunder the silver cord of life, and the more delicate tye of mutual love.

A servant or two, from a revering distance, cast many a wishful look, and condole their honoured master in the language of sighs. The condescending mildness, with which He was wont to give, and the dutiful alacrity, with which They always received, his easy commands; now imbitter their grief, and make it trickle plentifully down their honest cheeks.—His Friends, who have so often gladdened his mind with their enlivening converse, are miserable comforters. A sympathizing and mourning pity, is all the relief, they are able to contribute: unless it be augmented by their silent prayers for the divine succour, and a word of consolation suggested from the scripture*.—Those poor innocents, the children, crowd around the bed; drowned in tears, and almost frantic with grief, they sob out their little souls, and passionately cry; “Will he leave us? leave us, in a helpless condition! leave us to an injurious world!”—These separate streams are all united in the distressed spouse, and overwhelm her breast with a tide of sorrows. In her, the lover weeps; the wife mourns; and all the mother yearns. To her, the loss is beyond measure aggravated, by months and years of delightful society, and exalted friendship. Where, alas! can she find such cordial affection, or repose such unre-

served

* Texts of scripture, proper for such an occasion; containing promises—of support under affliction, Lam. iii. 32. Heb. xii. 6. 2 Cor. iv. 17.—of pardon, Isai. liii. 5. Isai. i. 18. 1 John ii. 1, 2. Acts x. 43.—of justification, Rom. v. 9. Rom. viii. 33, 34. 2 Cor. v. 21.—of victory over death. Psalm xxiii. 4. Psalm. lxxiii. 26. Hos. xiii. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57.—of a happy Resurrection. John vi. 40. 2 Cor. v. 1. Rev. vii. 16, 17.

served confidence? Where find so discreet a counsellor; so improving an example; and a guardian, so sedulously attentive, to the interests of herself, and her children? See! how she hangs over the languishing bed; most tenderly solicitous to sooth the bitter agonies of her dearer self; and, if it were possible, lengthen out a life, on which her own comfort, and the support of her little ones, principally depend. Behold her hands, trembling under direful apprehensions, yet wiping the cold dew from the livid cheeks! sometimes, staying the sinking head on her gentle arms, or resting it on her compassionate bosom. See! how she gazes, with a speechless ardor, on the pale countenance, and meagre features. While all her soft passions beat unutterable fondness, and her whole soul is wounded with exquisite anguish.

THE Sufferer, all patient and adoring, yields to the divine will; and, by submission, becomes superior to his affliction. He is sensibly touched with the disconsolate state of his attendants; and pierced with an anxious concern, for the wife, who will soon be a destitute Widow; for the children, who will soon be fatherless Orphans. Yet, "though cast down, not in despair." He is greatly refreshed, by his trust in the everlasting covenant, of his hope of approaching glory. Religion gives a dignity even to distress. At each interval of ease, he comforts his very comforters; and suffers with all the majesty of woe.

THE Soul, just going to abandon the tottering clay, collects all her force, and exerts her last efforts. The good man raises himself on his pillow; extends a kind hand to his servants, which is bathed in tears; takes an affecting farewell of his friends; clasps his wife in a feeble embrace; kisses the dear pledges of their mutual love; and then pours all that remains of life, and of strength, into the following words;—"I die, my dear Children: but
" God,

“God, the everlasting God, will be with you.
 “—Though you lose an earthly parent; you have
 “a father in heaven, who lives for evermore.—
 “Nothing, nothing but an unbelieving heart, and
 “religious life, can ever separate you, from the
 “regards of his Providence—from the endearments
 “of his love.”

He could go no farther. His heart was full; but utterance failed.—After a short pause, prompted by affectionate zeal, with difficulty, great difficulty, he added;—“You, the dear Partner of my
 “soul, you are now the only protector of our orphan-
 “phans.—I leave you under a weight of cares.
 “—But God, who defendeth the cause of the widow—God, whose promise is faithfulness and
 “truth—God hath said, I will never leave thee,
 “nor forsake thee*.—This revives my drooping
 “spirits—Let this support the wife of my bosom—
 “And now, O Father of compassions, into thy
 “hands I commend my spirit—encouraged by thy
 “promised goodness, I leave my fatherless”——

HERE, he fainted: fell back upon the bed; and lay, for some minutes, bereft of his senses. As a taper, upon the very point of extinction, is sometimes suddenly rekindled, and leaps into a quivering flame: so life, before it totally expired, gave a parting struggle, and once more looked abroad from the opening eye-lids.—He would fain have spoke; fain have uttered the sentence, he began: More than once he essayed: but the organs of speech were become like a broken vessel; and nothing but the obstructing phlegm, rattled in his throat. His aspect, however, spoke affection inexpressible. With all the father, all the husband, still living in his looks; he takes one more view of the dear creatures, whom he had often beheld with a paternal triumph. He turns his dying eyes on that beloved woman, whom he never beheld but with a glow of delight. Fixed in this posture, amidst smiles

* Heb. xiii. 5

smiles of love, and under a gleam of heaven, they shine out their last.

UPON this, the silent sorrow bursts into loud laments. They weep, and refuse to be comforted. Till some length of time, had given vent to the excess of passion; and the consolations of religion, had staunched their bleeding woes. Then, the afflicted family search for the sentence, which fell unfinished from those loved, those venerable, and pious lips. They find it recorded by the prophet Jeremiah, containing the direction of infinite wisdom, and the promise of almighty goodness: "Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me".— This, now, is the comfort of their life, and the joy of their heart. They treasure it up, in their memories, as a most valuable legacy. They rely upon it as an inexhaustible fund, to supply all their necessities; and to ensure the blessing of success, on all their honest labours. They are rich; they are happy; in this sacred pledge of divine favour. They fear no evil; they want no good; because God is their guide, and their guardian God.

No sooner turned from one memento of my own, and memorial of another's decease, but a second, a third, a long succession of these melancholy monitors, croud upon my sight †.—That which has fixed my observation, is one of a more grave and sable aspect than the former. I suppose it preserves the relics of a more aged person. One would conjecture, that he made somewhat of a figure in his station among the living, as his monument does among the funeral marbles. Let me draw near, and enquire of the stone, "Who, or what, is beneath its surface?"—I am informed, he was once the owner of a considerable estate; which was much improved, by his own application and management;

* Jerem. xlix. 11.

† ———Plurima mortis imago.

Virg.

management; that, he left the world in the busy period of life; advanced a little beyond the meridian—Probably, replied my musing mind, one of those indefatigable drudges, who rise early; late take rest; and eat the bread of carefulness; not to secure the loving-kindness of the LORD: not to make provision for any reasonable necessity: but only to amass together ten thousand times more, than they can possibly use. Did he not lay schemes for enlarging his fortune, and aggrandizing his family? Did he not purpose to join field to field, and add house to house; till his Possessions were almost as vast, as his Desires? that, then he would * sit down, and enjoy what he had acquired; breathe a while from his toilsome pursuit of things temporal, and perhaps, think a little of things eternal.

BUT see the Folly of Worldly Wisdom! How silly, how childish, is the sagacity of (what is called) manly and masterly prudence; when it contrives more solicitously for TIME, than it provides for ETERNITY! How strangely infatuated are those subtle heads; that weary themselves, in concerting measures for Shadows of a Day; and scarce bestow a thought, on everlasting Realities!—when every wheel moves on smoothly! when all the well-disposed designs are ripening apace for execution; and the long-expected crisis of enjoyment seems to approach; behold! God from on high laughs at the Babel-builder; death touches the labour'd bubble, and immediately it breaks. The cobweb, most finely spun indeed, but more easily dislodged, is swept away in an instant; and all the abortive projects are buried, in the same grave, with their projector.

—————* Hac mente laborem
Sese ferre, senes ut in otia tuta recedant,
Aiunt, cum sibi sint congesta cibaria.

Hor.

projector. So true is that verdict, which the wisdom from above passes, on these successful unfortunates: "They walk in a vain shadow, and disquiet themselves in vain†."

SPEAK, ye, that attended such a one in his last minutes; ye, that heard his expiring sentiments; did he not cry out in the language of disappointed sensuality, "O death! how terrible is thy approach, to a man that has devoted himself to the pursuit of present satisfactions, and exercised no concern for the never-ending hereafter! where alas! is the profit, where the comfort, of entering deep into the knowledge, and of being dextrous in the dispatch, of earthly affairs; since I have all the while, neglected the one thing needful? O destructive mistake! I have been attentive to every inferior interest; I have laid myself out on the trifles of a moment: but have disregarded heaven; have forgot eternal ages! oh! that my days"—here, he was going on to breathe some fruitless wishes; or to form, I know not what ineffectual resolutions. But, a sudden convulsion shook his nerves; disabled his tongue; and in less than an hour, dissolved his frame.

May the children of this world be warned, by the dying words of an unhappy brother; and gather advantage, from his misfortune. Why should they pant, with impatient ardor, after white and yellow earth, as if the universe did not afford sufficient, for every one to take a little? why should they lade themselves with thick clay when they are to "run" for an incorruptible crown, and press towards "the prize of their high calling?" why should they over-load the vessel, in which their everlasting ALL is embarked; or fill their arms with superfluities, when they are to swim for their lives? yet, so preposterous is the conduct of those persons,

D who

who are all industry, to heap up an abundance of the wealth which perisheth; but are scarce so much as faintly desirous of being rich towards God.

O! that we may walk from henceforth through all these glittering toys, at least with a wise indifference, if not with a superior disdain! having enough for the conveniencies of life, let us only accommodate ourselves with things below, and lay up our treasures in the regions above.—Whereas, if we indulge an anxious concern, or lavish an inordinate care, on any transitory possessions; we shall rivet them to our affections with so firm an union, that the utmost severity of pain must attend the separating stroke. By such an eager attachment, to what will certainly be ravished from us; we shall only insure to ourselves accumulated anguish, against the agonizing hour: we shall plant, beforehand, our dying pillow with thorns*.

SOME, I perceive, arrived at threescore years and ten, before they made their exit; nay, some few resigned not their breath, till they had numbered fourscore revolving harvests.—These, I would hope, “remembered their Creator in the “days of their youth;” before their strength became labour and sorrow; before that low ebb of languishing nature, when the keepers of the house tremble, and those that look out of the windows are darkened†: when, even the lighting down of the Grasshopper, is a burden on the bending shoulders;

* Lean not on earth; 'twill pierce thee to the heart;
A broken reed at best, but oft a spear;
On its sharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires.

Night Thoughts, No. III.

† Eccles. xii. 3. 5. I need not remind my reader, that, by the former of these figurative expressions, is signified the enervated state of the hands and arms; by the latter the dimness of the eyes, or the total loss of sight: that, taken in connection with other parts of the chapter, they exhibit, in a series of elegant similitudes, a description of the various infirmities, which accompany old age.

shoulders; and desire itself fails in the listless, inactive, lethargic soul:—Before those heavy hours come, and those tiresome moments draw nigh; in which there is too much reason to say, “We have “no pleasure in them: no improvement from “them.”

If their lamps were unfurnished with oil, how unfit must they be, in such decrepit circumstances, to go to the market, and buy!* For, besides a variety of disorders, arising from the enfeebled constitution; their corruptions must be surprisingly strengthened, by such a long course of irreligion. Evil habits must have struck the deepest root; must have twisted themselves with every fibre of the heart; and be as thoroughly ingrained in the disposition, as the soot in the Ethiopian's complexion, or the spots in the Leopard's skin. If such a one, under such disadvantages, surmounts all the difficulties, that lie in his way to glory; it must be a great and mighty salvation indeed. If such a one escapes destruction, and is saved at the last, it must, without all peradventure, be—so as by fire †.

THIS is the season, that stands in need of comfort, and is very improper to enter upon the conflict. The husbandman should now be putting in his sickle, or eating the fruit of his labours; not beginning to break up the ground, or scatter the seed.

Nothing, 'tis true, is impossible with God: he said, “let there be Light, and there was Light:” instantaneous light, diffused, as quick as thought, through all the dismal dominion of primeval darkness. At his command, a leprosy of the longest continuance, and utmost inveteracy, departs in a moment. He can, in the greatness of his strength, quicken the wretch, that has lain dead in trespasses and sins, not four days only, but fourscore years.

D 2

—Yet

* Matt. xxv. 9.

† 1 Cor. iii. 15.

—Yet trust not, O trust not, a point of such inexpressible importance, to so dreadful an uncertainty. God may suspend his power; may withdraw his help; may swear in his wrath, that such abusers of his long-suffering shall “never enter into his rest.”

YE therefore, that are vigorous in health, and blooming in years, improve the precious opportunity. Improve your golden hours, to the noblest of all purposes: such as may render you meet, for the inheritance of saints in light; and ascertain your title, to a state of immortal youth; to a crown of eternal glory *.——Stand not, all the prime of your day, idle; trifle no longer with the offers of this immense felicity: but make haste, and delay not the time, to keep God’s commandments. While you are loitering in a gay insensibility, death may be bending his bow, and marking you out for speedy victims.——Not long ago, I happened to ’spy a thoughtless Jay. The poor bird was idly busied in dressing his pretty plumes, or hopping carelessly from spray to spray. A sportsman, coming by, observes the feathered rover. Immediately he lifts the tube, and levels his blow. Swifter than a whirlwind, flies the leaden death; and, in a moment, lays the silly creature, breathless on the ground.——Such, such, may be the fate of the man, who
has

* May I be permitted to recommend, as a treasure of inestimable value, and a treatise particularly apposite to my subject, Dr. LUCAS’s inquiry after happiness? That part especially, which displays the method, and enumerates the advantages, of improving life, or living much in a little time. Chap. III. p. 158 of the 6th edit.——An author; in whom the gentleman, the scholar, and the christian, are most happily united.—A performance, which, in point of solid argument, unaffected piety, and a vein of thought amazingly fertile, has, perhaps, no superior.——Nor can I wish my reader a more refined pleasure, or a more substantial happiness, than that of having the sentiments of this entertaining and pathetic writer, wove into the very texture of his heart.

has a fair occasion of obtaining grace to day, and wantonly postpones the improvement of it till to-morrow. He may be cut off, in the midst of his folly, and ruined for ever, while he is dreaming of being wise hereafter.

SOME, no doubt, came to this their last retreat, full of piety, and full of days; "as a shock of corn, ripe with age, and laden with plenty, cometh in his season*."—These were children of light, and wise in their generation; wise towards God; wise for their most important concerns; and wise for that blissful eternity, they now inherit—Rich also they were, more honourably and permanently rich, than all the votaries of Mammon. The wealth of the one has made itself wings, and is irrecoverably gone: while the wretched acquirers are transmitted, to that place of penury and pain, where, not so much as one drop of water is allowed, to cool their scorched tongues. Whereas, the stores of the other still abide with them, will never depart from them; but make them glad for ever and ever, in the city of their God. Their treasures were such, as no created power could take away; such as none but infinite beneficence can bestow; and (Oh! comfortable to consider!) such as I, and every indigent longing sinner, may obtain; treasures of heavenly knowledge, and saving faith; treasures of atoning blood, and imputed righteousness.

HERE † lie their bodies, in "peaceable habitations and quiet resting places." Here they have
thrown

* Job v. 26.

† Some, I know, are offended at our burying corpses within the church, and exclaim against it, as a very great impropriety and indecency: but this, I imagine, proceeds from an excessive and mistaken delicacy. Let proper care be taken to secure from injury, the foundations of the building, and to prevent the exhalation of any noxious effluvia from the putrifying flesh; and I cannot discover any inconveniences attending this practice.

The

thrown off every burden, and are escaped from every snare. The head aches no more; the eye forgets

The notion, that noisome carcases (as they are called) are very unbecoming a place, consecrated to religious purposes, seems to be founded on an antiquated Jewish canon; whereby it was declared, that a dead body imparted defilement to the person, who touched it: and polluted the spot, where it was lodged. On which account, the Jews were scrupulously careful to have their sepulchres built at a distance from their houses; and made it a point of conscience, not to suffer any cemeteries to subsist in the city. But as this was a rite purely ceremonial, it seems to be entirely superseded by the gospel dispensation.

I cannot forbear thinking, that, under the christian economy, there is a propriety and usefulness in the custom—usefulness, because it must render our solemn assemblies more venerable and awful. For, when we walk over the dust of our friends, or kneel upon the ashes of our relations; this awakening circumstance must strike a lively impression of our own mortality. And what consideration can be more effectual, to make us serious and attentive in hearing, earnest and importunate in praying?—As for the fitness of the usage, it seems perfectly suitable to the design of those sacred edifices. They are set apart for God not only to receive his worshippers, but to preserve the furniture for holy ministrations, and what is, in a peculiar manner, appropriated to the divine Majesty. And are not the bodies of the saints the Almighty's property? Were they not once the objects of his tender love? Are they not still the subjects of his special care? Has he not given commandment concerning the bones of his elect; and charged the ocean and enjoined the grave, to keep them till that day? Are they not precious in his esteem? So precious, that when mountains, bright with gems, or rich with mines, are abandoned to the devouring flames; these shall be rescued from the fiery ruin; these shall be translated into JEHOVAH's kingdom; and conjointly with the soul, made "his jewels," made "his peculiar treasure;" made to shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.

Is not CHRIST the LORD of our bodies? Are they not bought with a price? Bought, not with corruptible things, silver and gold; but with his divine blood. And if the blessed Jesus purchased the Redemption of our bodies, at so infinitely dear a rate; can it enter into our hearts to conceive, that he should dislike to have them reposed, under his own habitation?—Once more; are not the bodies of the faithful, temples of the Holy Ghost? And is there not, upon this supposition,

forgets to weep; the flesh is no longer racked with acute, nor pines away under lingering distempers. Here they receive a final release from pain, and an everlasting discharge from sorrows. Here, danger never threatens them, with her terrifying alarms; but tranquility softens their couch, and safety guards their repose.—Rest then, ye precious relics, within this hospitable gloom; rest in gentle slumbers, till the last trumpet shall give the welcome signal, and sound aloud, through all your silent mansions, “Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you †.”

To these how calm was the Evening of Life! In what a smiling serenity, did their sun go down! When their flesh and their heart failed, how reviving was the remembrance of an all-sufficient Redeemer; once dying for their sins, now risen again for their justification! How cheering the well-grounded hope of pardon for their transgressions, and peace with God, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD! How did this assuage the agonies, and sweeten the bitterness of death?—Where now is Wealth, with all her golden mountains? Where is Honour, with her proud trophies of renown? Where are all the vain pomps of a deluded World? Can they administer any support in this last extremity? Can they com-
pose

position, an apparent propriety, rather than the least indecorum, in remitting these temples of flesh, to the temples made with hands? They are vessels of honour; instruments of righteousness; and, even when broken by death, like the fragments of a golden bowl, are valuable, are worthy to be laid up in the safest, most honourable repositories.

Upon the whole, since the Lord Jesus has purchased them, at the expence of his blood; and the blessed Spirit has honoured them, with his in-dwelling presence, since they are right dear in the sight of the adorable Trinity, and undoubted heirs of a glorious immortality: why should it be thought a thing improper, to admit them to a transient rest, in their heavenly Father's house? Why may they not lie down and sleep, in the outer courts, since they are soon to be introduced into the inmost mansions of everlasting honour and joy

† Isai, lx. 1,

pose the affrighted thoughts, or buoy up the departing soul amidst all the pangs of dissolution?—The followers of the Lamb seem pleased and triumphant, even at their last gasp. “God’s everlasting Arms “are underneath†” their fainting heads. His Spirit whispers peace and consolation to their consciences. In the strength of these heavenly succours, they quit the field of battle, not Captives, but Conquerors; with “hopes full of immortality.”

AND now they are gone.—The struggles of reluctant nature are over. The body sleeps in death; the soul launches into the invisible state.—But, who can imagine the delightful surprize, when they find themselves surrounded by guardian Angels, instead of weeping Friends? How securely do they wing their way, and pass through unknown worlds, under the conduct of these celestial Guides!—The Vale of Tears is quite lost. Farewel for ever the realms of woe, and rage of malignant beings! They arrive on the Frontiers of inexpressible Felicity. They “are come to the city of the living God;” while a voice, sweeter than music in her softest strains; sweet as the harmony of hymning seraphims; congratulates their Arrival, and bespeaks their Admission: “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; “and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; that the “heirs of glory may enter in.”

HERE, then, let us leave “the Spirits and Souls “of the Righteous; escaped from an entangling Wilderness, and received into a Paradise of delights! escaped from the territories of disquietude, and settled in regions of unmolested security *! Here they

† Deut. xxxiii. 27.

* Seneca’s Reflections upon the Happy State of Holy Souls, delivered from the Burden of the flesh, are truly admirable. — ‘In hoc tam procelloso, & in omnes Tempestates exposito navigantibus mari, nullus portus, nisi mortis est. Nec itaque invideris Fratri tuo; quiescit. Tandem liber, tandem tutus, tandem

they sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of his Father. Here, they mingle with an innumerable company of angels, and rejoice around the Throne of the Lamb; rejoice in the Fruition of present felicity, and in the assured Expectation of an inconceivable Addition to their Bliss; "when God shall call the heavens from above, and the Earth, that he may judge his People."——

"Fools accounted their life madness, and their end to be without honour: but, they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot, their distinguished and eternal lot, is among the Saints †!" However, therefore, an undiscerning world may despise, and a profane world vilify, the truly religious; be this the supreme the invariable desire of my heart! "Let me live the life, and die the death, of the righteous. Oh! let my latter end, and future state, be like theirs."

WHAT Figure is that, which strikes my eye, from an eminent part of the Wall? It is not only placed in a more elevated Situation than the rest, but carries a more splendid and sumptuous air than ordinary. Swords and spears, murdering engines, and instruments of slaughter, adorn the stone with a formidable magnificence.——It proves to be the Monument of a noble Warrior.

Is such respect, thought I, paid to the memory of this brave Soldier, for sacrificing his life to the public Good?——Then, what honours, what immortal honours, are due to the great Captain of our salvation? who, though Lord of the Angelic Legions; and supreme commander of all the heavenly Hosts; willingly offered himself a bleeding propitiation for Sinners!

The

tandem æternus est. Fruitur nunc aperto et libero Cœlo; ex humili & depresso, in eum emicuit locum, qui solutas vinculis animas beato recipit sinu; & nunc omnia rerum natura bonam cum summa voluptate percipit. Sen. ad Polyb.

† Wisd. v. 4, 5.

The One died, being a Mortal; and only yielded up a life, that was long before forfeited to divine justice; which must soon have been surrendered as a Debt to Nature, if it had not fallen as a prey to War;—But CHRIST took flesh, and gave up the ghost, though he was the great I AM; the fountain of existence, who calls happiness and immortality all his own. He, who thought it no robbery to be Equal with God; he, whose outgoings were from everlasting; even he, was made in the Likeness of Man, and cut off out of the land of the living. Wonder, O heavens! Be astonished, O earth! He died the death, of whom it is witnessed, that he is “the true God, and eternal life*!”

THE One exposed himself to Peril, in the Service of his Sovereign, and his Country; which, though it was glorious to do, yet would have been ignominious, in such circumstances, to have declined.—But CHRIST took the field, though he was the blessed and only Potentate, the KING of kings, and LORD of lords. CHRIST took the field, though he was sure to drop in the engagement; and put on the harness, though he knew before hand, it must reek with his Blood. That prince of heaven resigned his royal person, not barely to the Hazard, but to the inevitable Stroke; to death, certain in its approach, and armed with all its horrors.—And for whom? Not for those who were in any degree deserving; but for his own disobedient creatures; for the pardon of condemned malefactors; for a band of rebels, a race of traitors, the most obnoxious and inexcusable of all criminals; whom he might have left to perish in their iniquities, without the least impeachment of his Goodness; nay, to the advantageous Display of his avenging Justice.

THE One, 'tis probable, died expeditiously; was soon wounded, and soon slain: A bullet, lodged in his heart, a sword, sheathed in his breast, or a battle-ax,

* 1 John v. 20.

battle-ax, cleaving the brain, might put a speedy End to his misery, dispatch him "as in a moment:"—Whereas the divine Redeemer expired in tedious and protracted torments. His pangs were as lingering as they were exquisite. Even in the Prelude to his last sufferings, what a load of sorrows overwhelmed his sacred humanity! till the intolerable pressure wrung blood, instead of sweat, from every pore; till the crimson flood bathed his body, stained all his raiment, and tinged the very stones.—But, when the last Scene of the tragedy commenced; when the executioner's hammer had nailed him to the cross; Oh! how many dismal Hours, did that amiable and illustrious sufferer hang, a spectacle of woe to God, to angels, and to men: His temples mangled with the thorny crown: his hands and feet cleft with the rugged irons; his flesh covered with wounds, smarting and agonizing in every vein; and his soul, his very soul, pierced with pangs of unutterable distress! So long he hung, that nature, through all her dominions, was thrown into sympathizing commotions. The earth could no longer sustain such barbarous indignities, without trembling; nor the sun behold them, without horror. Nay, so long did he hang in this extremity of torture, that the alarm reached even the remote regions of the dead.—Never, O my soul, never forget the amazing truth: The Lamb of God was worried, was slaughtered with the utmost inhumanity, and endured death, in all its bitterness, for thee. His murderers, studiously cruel, so guided the fatal cup, that he tasted every drop of its gall, before he drank it off to the very dregs.

ONCE again; The one died like a hero, and fell gallantly in the field of battle.—But died not CHRIST "as a fool dieth*?" Not on the bed of honour, with scars of glory on his breast; but, like
some

* 2 Sam. iii. 33.

some execrable miscreant on a gibbet; with lashes of the vile scourge on his back. Yes, the blessed JESUS bowed his expiring head on the accursed tree, and poured out his soul betwixt two infamous felons; suspended between heaven and earth, as an outcast from both, and unworthy of either.

OH! what suitable returns, of inflamed and adoring devotion, can we make to the Holy One of God, thus dying, that we might live? Dying in ignominy and anguish, that we might live for ever in the heights of joy, and sit for ever on thrones of glory. —Alas! it is not in us, impotent, insensible mortals, to be duly thankful. He only, who confers such inconceivably rich favours, can enkindle a proper warmth of grateful affection. Then build thyself a monument, most gracious Immanuel, build thyself an everlasting monument, of gratitude in our souls. Inscribe the memory of thy matchless beneficence, not with ink and pen, but with that precious blood, which gushed from thy streaming veins. Engrave it, not with the hammer and chissel, but with the sharpened spear, which pierced thy blessed side. Let it stand conspicuous and indelible, not on outward tables of stone, but on the very inmost tables of our hearts.

ONE thing more let me observe, before I bid adieu to this entombed warrior, and his garnished sepulchre. How mean are these ostentatious methods of bribing the vote of fame, and purchasing a little posthumous renown! What a poor substitute for a set of memorable actions, is polished alabaster, or the mimicry of sculptured marble! The real excellency of this * bleeding patriot is written on

* Sir Belvil Granville, slain in the civil wars, at an engagement with the rebels.—It may possibly be some entertainment to the readers, to subjoin Sir Belvil's character, as it is drawn by that celebrated pen, which wrote the history of those unfortunate times — "That which would have clouded any victory,
" says

on the minds of his countrymen: it would be remembered with applause, so long as the nation subsists, without this artificial expedient to perpetuate it——And such, such is the monument I would wish for myself. Let me leave a memorial in the breasts of my fellow-creatures. Let surviving friends bear witness, that I have not lived to myself alone, nor been altogether unserviceable in my generation. O! let an uninterrupted series of beneficent offices be the inscription, and the best interests of my acquaintance the plate, that exhibits it.

LET the poor, as they pass by my grave, point at the little spot, and thankfully acknowledge,
 “ There lies the man, whose unwearied kindness
 “ was the constant relief of my various distresses;
 “ who tenderly visited my languishing bed, and
 “ readily supplied my indigent circumstances.
 “ How often were his councils a guide to my perplexed thoughts, and a cordial to my dejected spirit! ’Tis owing to God’s blessing on his reasonable charities, and prudent consolations; that
 “ I now live, and live in comfort.”——Let a person, once ignorant and ungodly, lift up his eyes to heaven, and say within himself, as he walks over my bones, “ Here are the last remains of that sincere friend, who watched for my soul. I can never forget, with what a heedless gaiety I was posting on in the paths of perdition; and I tremble
 “ ble

“ says the noble historian, and made the loss of others less
 “ spoken of, was the death of Sir Belvil Granville. He was
 “ indeed an excellent person, whose activity, interest, and reputation, were the foundation of what had been done in
 “ Cornwall: His temper and affections so public, that no accident which happened, could make any impression upon
 “ him: and his example kept others from taking any thing ill,
 “ or at least seeming to do so. In a word, a brighter courage,
 “ and a gentler disposition, were never married together, to
 “ make the most chearful and innocent conversation.”

Clar. Hist. Reb. vol. II.

“ ble to think, into what irretrievable ruin I might
 “ quickly have been plunged into, had not his faith-
 “ ful admonitions arrested me in the wild career.
 “ I was unacquainted with the gospel of peace, and
 “ unconcerned about its unsearchable treasures:
 “ but now enlightened by his instructive conver-
 “ sation, I see the all-sufficiency of my Saviour;
 “ and, animated by his repeated exhortations, I
 “ count all things but loss, that I may win CHRIST.
 “ Methinks his discourses, seasoned with religion,
 “ and blessed by grace, still tingle in my ears; are
 “ still warm on my heart; and, I trust, will be
 “ more and more operative, till we meet each other
 “ in the house not made with hands, eternal in the
 “ heavens.”

BUT, the only infallible way of immortalizing
 our characters; a way equally open to the meanest
 and most exalted fortune, is, “ To make our call-
 “ ing and election sure;” to gain some sweet evi-
 dence, that our names are written in heaven. Then,
 however they may be disregarded or forgotten, a-
 mong men; they will not fail to be had in everlast-
 ing remembrance, before the LORD.—This is, of
 all distinctions, far the noblest. This will issue in
 never-dying renown. Ambition, be this thy object,
 and every page of scripture will sanctify thy pas-
 sion; even grace itself will fan thy flame.—Every
 earthly memorial will shortly be obliterated. The
 tongue of those, whose happiness we have zealously
 promoted, must soon be silent in the coffin. Charac-
 ters cut with a pen of iron, and committed to the
 solid rock, will ere-long cease to be legible *. But
 as many as are inrolled “ in the Lamb’s book of
 “ life,” he himself declares, shall never be blotted
 out of those annals of Eternity †. When a flight
 of years has mouldered the triumphant column
 into

* ——— ‘Data sunt ipsis quoque fata sepulchris.’ Juv

† Rev. iii. 5.

into dust: when the brazen statue perishes, under the corroding hand of time: those honours still continue; still are blooming and incorruptible in the world of glory.

Make the extended skies your tomb;
 Let stars record your worth:
 Yet know, vain mortals, all must die,
 As nature's sickliest birth.
 Would bounteous heav'n indulge my pray'r,
 I frame a nobler choice;
 Nor living with the pompous pile;
 Nor, dead, regret the loss.
 In thy fair Book of Life divine,
 My God, inscribe my name:
 There let it fill some humble place,
 Beneath the slaughter'd Lamb.
 Thy saints, while ages roll away,
 In endless fame survive;
 Their glories, o'er the wrongs of time,
 Greatly triumphant, live.

YONDER entrance leads, I suppose, to the vault. Let me turn aside, and take one view of the Habitation, and its tenants.—The fullen door grates upon its hinges: not used to receive many visitants, it admits me with reluctance and murmurs.—What meaneth this sudden trepidation: while I descend the steps, and am visiting the pale nations of the dead?—Be composed, my spirits: there is nothing to fear, in these quiet chambers: “Here, even the wicked cease from troubling.”

Good Heavens! what a solemn scene! How dismal the gloom! Here is perpetual darkness, and night even at noon-day.—How doleful the solitude! Not one trace of chearful society; but sorrow and terror seem to have made this, their dread-
 ed

ed abode.—Hark! how the hollow dome re-sounds at every tread. The echoes, that long have slept, are awakened, and whisper along the walls.

A BEAM, or two, finds its way through the grates: and reflects a feeble glimmer, from the nails of the coffins. So many of those sad spectacles, half concealed in shades; half seen dimly by the baleful twilight; add a deeper horror to these gloomy mansions.—I pore upon the inscriptions, and am just able to pick out; That these are the remains of the rich, and renowned. No vulgar dead are deposited here. The most illustrious, and right honourable, have claimed this for their last retreat. And, indeed, they retain somewhat of a shadowy Pre-eminence. They lie, ranged in mournful order, and in a sort of silent pomp, under the arches of an ample sepulchre: while meaner corpses, without much ceremony, “go down to the stones of the
“pit.”

My apprehensions recover from their surprize: I find, here are no phantoms, but such as fear raises.
——However it still amazes me, to observe the wonders of this nether world. Those who received vast revenues; and called whole lordships their own; are here reduced to a few sheets of lead. Rooms of state, and sumptuous furniture, are resigned; for no other ornament than the shroud, for no other apartment than the darksome niche. No splendid retinue, attends this solitary dwelling: the lordly equipage, hovers no longer about the lifeless master; nothing but the sable banners, which seem to be displayed in triumph, over a prostrate captive, or a dusty statue, which while the regardless world is as gay as ever, the sculptor's hand has taught to weep. Instead of the star, that blazed upon the breast, or coronet, that glittered round the temples; the only remains of departed dignity are, the weather-beaten atchievement, and tattered
escutcheon—

escutcheon.—I see no splendid retinue surrounding this solitary dwelling. The lordly equipage hovers no longer about the lifeless master. He has no other attendant, than a dusty statue; which, while the regardless world is as gay as ever, the sculptor's hand has taught to weep.

Those who gloried in high-born ancestors, and noble pedigree, here drop their lofty pretensions. They acknowledge kindred with creeping things, and *quarter arms* with the meanest reptiles. *They say to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister.*—Or, should they still assume the style of distinction, alas! how impotent were the claim! how apparent the ostentation!* Mortifying truth! sufficient, one would think, to wean the most sanguine appetite from this transitory state of things; from its sickly satisfactions, its fading glories, its vanishing treasures.

For now, ye lying vanities of life!
Ye ever-tempting, ever-cheating train!
Where are ye now? And what is your amount †?

WHAT is all the world, to these poor breathless beings?—What are their pleasures? A bubble broke.—What their honours? A dream that is forgotten. What the sum-total of their enjoyments below? Once perhaps, it appeared to inexperienced and fond desire, something considerable: but, now death has measured it with his line, and weighed it in his scale, what is the upshot? Alas! it is shorter than a span; lighter than the dancing spark; and driven away, like the dissolving smoke.

INDULGE,

* HERE LIES THE GREAT—False Marble! where?
Nothing but poor and sordid dust lies here.

COWLEY.

† THOMS. Winter, lin. 210. last Edit.

INDULGE, my soul, a serious pause. Recollect all the gay things, that were wont to dazzle thy eyes, and inveigle thy affections. Here, examine those baits of sense: here, form an estimate of their real value. Suppose thyself first among the favourites of fortune; who revel in the lap of pleasure, who shine in the robes of honour; and swim in tides of inexhausted riches: yet, how soon would the passing bell proclaim thy exit! And, when once that iron call, has summoned thee to thy future reckoning; where would all these gratifications be? At that period, how will all the pageantry of the most affluent, conspicuous, or luxurious circumstances, vanish into empty air! and is this a happiness, so passionately to be coveted?

I THANK you, ye relicts of sounding titles, and magnificent names: ye have taught me more of the littleness of the world, than all the volumes of my library. Your nobility, arrayed in a winding-sheet; your grandeur, mouldering in an urn; are the most invincible proofs, of the nothingness of created things. Never, surely, did Providence write this important point, in such legible characters; as in the ashes of my lord, or on the corpse of his grace. * Let others, if they please, pay their obsequious court to your wealthy sons: and ignobly fawn, or anxiously sue, for preferments: my thoughts shall often resort, in pensive contemplation, to the sepulchres of their fires; and learn from their sleeping dust, to moderate my expectations from mortals: to stand disengaged from every undue attachment, to the little interests of time:—to get above the delusive amusements of honour; the gaudy tinsels of wealth; and all the empty shadows of a perishing world.

HARK! What sound is that?—In such a situation, every noise alarms.—Solemn and slow, it
breaks

* —Mors sola fatetur

Quantula sint hominum corpuscula.

Juv.

breaks again upon the silent air.—'Tis the striking of the clock: designed, one would imagine, to ratify all my serious meditations. Methinks, it says amen, and sets a seal, to every improving hint. It tells me; that another portion of my appointed time is elapsed. One calls it, "The knell of my departed hours." 'Tis the watch-word to vigilance, and activity. It cries, in the ear of reason, "redeem the time. Catch the favourable gales of opportunity: O! catch them while they breathe; before they are irrecoverably lost. The span of life shortens continually. Thy minutes are all upon the wing, and hastening to be gone. Thou art a borderer upon eternity; and making incessant advances to the state, thou art contemplating."—O! may the admonition sink deep, into an attentive and obedient mind! May it teach me that heavenly arithmetic, of "numbering my days, and applying my heart unto wisdom!"

I HAVE often walked, beneath the impending promontory's craggy cliff; I have often trod the vast spaces, of the lonely desert; and penetrated the inmost recesses, of the dreary cavern: but never, never beheld nature louring, with so tremendous a form; never felt such impressions of awe, striking cold on my heart; as under these black-brow'd arches, amidst these mouldy walls, and surrounded by such rueful objects; where melancholy, deepest melancholy, for ever spreads her raven wings.—Let me now emerge from the damp and dreadful obscurity. Farewel, ye seats of desolation, and shades of death!—Gladly I revisit the realms of day.

HAVING cast a superficial view, upon these receptacles of the dead; curiosity prompts my inquiry, to a more intimate survey. And could we draw back the covering of the tomb; could we see, what those are now, who once were mortals—Oh! how would it surprise, and grieve us! surprise us, to behold the prodigious transformation, that has taken

place on every individual; grieve us, to observe the dishonour done to our nature in general, within these subterraneous lodgments!

HERE, the sweet and winning aspect, that wore perpetually an attractive smile; grins horribly a naked, ghastly skull.—The eye, that outshone the diamond's lustre; and glanced her lovely lightning, into the most guarded heart: Alas! Where is it? Where shall we find the rolling sparkler? How are all those radiant glories totally, totally eclipsed!—The tongue, that once commanded all the charms of harmony, and all the powers of eloquence, in this strange land has "forgot its cunning." Where are now those strains of melody, which ravished our ears? Where is that flow of persuasion, which carried captive our judgments? The great master of language, and of song, is become silent as the night that surrounds him—The pampered flesh, solately cloathed in purple, and fine linen, how is it covered rudely with clods of clay! There was a time, when the timorously nice creature, would scarce "* adventure to set a " foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness;" but is now enwrapped in clammy earth, and sleeps on no softer a pillow than the ragged gravel-stones.—Here, "the strong men bow themselves:" The nervous arm is unstrung; the brawny sinews are relaxed; the limbs not long ago the Seats of vigour and activity, lie down motionless; and the bones, which were as bars of iron, are crumbled into dust.

HERE, the man of business forgets all his favourite schemes, and discontinues the pursuit of gain. Here, is a total stand to the circulation of merchandize, and the hurry of trade. In these solitary recesses, as in the building of Solomon's temple, is heard no sound of the hammer and ax.

The

* Deut. xxviii. 56.

The winding-sheet, and the coffin, are the utmost bound of all earthly devices; "hitherto may they go, but no farther."—Here, the sons of pleasure take a final farewell, of their dear delights. No more is the sensualist anointed with oil, or crowned with rose-buds: he chants no more to the melody of the viol; nor revels any longer, at the banquet of wine. Instead of sumptuous tables, and delicious treats, the poor voluptuary is himself a feast for fattened insects; "the reptile riots in his Flesh; "the worm feeds sweetly on him.†"—Here also, beauty fails; bright beauty drops her lustre here. Oh! how her roses fade, and her lilies languish, in this bleak soil! how does the grand leveler pour contempt, upon the charmer of our Hearts! How turn to deformity, what captivated the world before!

COULD the lover have a sight of his once enchanting fair-one; what a startling astonishment would seize him!—"Is this the object, I not long ago so passionately admired! I said, she was divinely fair; and thought her, more than mortal. Her form was symmetry itself; every elegance breathed in her air; and all the graces waited on her motions.—'Twas music, when she spoke: but when she spoke encouragement, 'twas little less than rapture. How my heart danced, to those charming accents!—And can that, which, some weeks ago, was to admiration lovely, be now so insufferably loathsome?—Where are those blushing cheeks; where the coral lips; where that ivory neck, on which the curling jet, in such glossy ringlets, flowed; with a thousand other beauties of person, and ten thousand delicacies of action*——Amazing, distracting alteration!

† Job xxiv. 20.

* Quo fugit Venus? Heu! Quove color? dicens
Quo motus? Quid habes, illius, illius,
Quæ spirabat Amores,
Quæ me surpuerat mihi?

Hor.

“ alteration!—Fondly I gazed upon the glittering
 “ meteor: it shone brightly; and I mistook it for
 “ a star; for a permanent and substantial good.
 “ But how is it fallen! fallen from on orb, not its
 “ own! And all that I can trace on earth, is but
 “ a putrid mass.”

LIE, poor Florella! lie deep, as thou dost, in obscure darkness. Let night, with her impenetrable shades, always conceal thee. Thy dwelling agrees with thy condition. Let no prying eye, be witness to thy disgrace; but let thy surviving sisters, think upon thy state; when they contemplate, the idol in the glass. When the pleasing image rises gracefully to view, surrounded with a world of charms; and flushed with joy, at the consciousness of them all:—Then, in those minutes of temptation and danger, when vanity uses to steal into the thoughts!—Then, let them remember, what a veil of horror is drawn over a face, that was once beautiful and brilliant, as theirs. Such a seasonable reflection, might regulate the labours of the toilet, and create a more earnest solicitude, to polish the jewel, than to varnish the casket. It might then become their highest ambition, to have the mind decked with divine virtues, and dressed after the amiable pattern, of their Redeemer's holiness.

AND would this prejudice their persons, or depreciate their charms?—Quite the reverse: It would spread a sort of heavenly glory, over the finest set of features; and heighten the loveliness, of every other engaging accomplishment.—And what is yet a more inviting consideration; these flowers would not wither with nature, nor be tarnished by time; but open continually into richer beauties, and flourish even in the winter of age.—But, the most incomparable recommendation of these noble qualities, is, that from their hallowed relics, as
 from

from the fragrant ashes of the Phoenix, will ere long arise an illustrious form; bright as the wings of angels; lasting, as the light of the new Jerusalem.

For my part; the remembrance of this sad revolution, shall make me ashamed to pay my devotion to a shrine of perishing flesh; and afraid to expect all my happiness, from so brittle a joy. It shall teach me, not to think too highly of well-proportioned clay; though formed in the most elegant mould, and animated with the sweetest soul. 'Tis heaven's last, best, and crowning gift; to be received with gratitude, and cherished with love, as a most valuable blessing; not worshipped with the incense of Flattery, and strains of fulsome adoration, as a goddess—It will cure, I trust, the dotage of my eyes: and incline me always to prefer the substantial "Ornaments of a meek and virtuous spirit;" before the transient decorations, of white and red on the skin.

HERE, I called in my roving meditations, from their long excursion on this tender subject. Fancy listened awhile, to the soliloquy of a lover; but now judgment resumes the reins, and guides my thoughts to more near and self-interesting inquiries.—However, upon a review of the whole scene: crowded with spectacles of mortality, and trophies of death: I could not forbear smiting my breast, and fetching a sigh, and lamenting over the noblest of all visible beings, lying in ruins under the feet of "the pale horse, and his rider*." I could not forbear that pathetic exclamation, "O! thou †
"Adam, what hast thou done!" What desolation, has thy disobedience wrought in the earth!—O! the ruinous, the transcendent malignity of sin! sin, has demolished so many stately structures of flesh: sin, has made such havock, among the most excellent ranks of God's lower creation: and sin (that deadly
bane

* Rev. vi. 8.

† 2 Esdr. vii. 48.

bane of our nature) would have plunged our better part, into the execrable horrors of the nethermost hell; had not our merciful Mediator interposed, and given himself for our ransom.—Therefore, what grateful acknowledgments, does the whole world of penitent sinners owe; what ardent returns of love, will a whole heaven of glorified believers pay; to such a friend, benefactor, and deliverer!

MUSING upon these melancholy objects, a faithful remembrancer suggests from within——“ Must
 “ this sad change, succeed in me also? Am I to
 “ draw my last gasp; to become a breathless corpse;
 “ and be, what I deplore? † Is there a time ap-
 “ proaching, when this body shall be carried out
 “ upon the bier, and consigned to its clay-cold
 “ bed? while some kind acquaintance, perhaps,
 “ may let fall one parting tear; and cry, Alas!
 “ my brother!”——Nothing is more certain. A decree, much surer than the law of the Medes and Persians, has irrevocably determined the doom.

SHOULD one of these ghastly figures burst from his confinement; and start up, in frightful deformity before me: should the haggard skeleton lift a clattering hand; and point it full in my view: should it open the stiffened Jaws; and, with a hoarse tremendous murmur, break this profound silence: should it accost me, as Samuel’s apparition addressed the trembling King——“ The Lord shall
 “ deliver thee also into the hands of death; yet a
 “ little while and thou shalt be with me *”——The solemn warning, delivered in so striking a manner, must strongly impress my imagination: a message
 in

† I pass, with melancholy state,
 By all these solemn heaps of fate;
 And think, as soft and sad I tread,
 Above the venerable dead,
 “ Time was, like me, they life possess’d;
 “ And time shall be, when I shall rest.”

* 1 Sam. xxviii. 19.

in thunder, would scarce sink deeper—Yet, there is abundantly greater reason to be alarmed, by that express declaration of the LORD GOD Almighty, “Thou shalt surely die.”—Well then, since sentence is passed; since I am a condemned man; and know not when the dead warrant may arrive; let me die to sin, and die to the world; before I die beneath the stroke, of a righteous GOD. Let me employ the little uncertain interval of respite from execution: in preparing for a happier state, and a better life; that, when the fatal moment comes, and I am commanded to shut my eyes, upon all things here below; I may open them again, to see my Saviour in the mansions above.

SINCE this body, which is so fearfully and wonderfully made, must fall to pieces in the grave; since I must soon resign all my bodily powers to darkness, inactivity, and corruption; Oh! let it be my constant care to use them well, while I possess them!—Let my hands be stretched forth to relieve the needy: and always be “more ready to give, than to receive.”——Let my knees bend in deepest humiliations before the throne of grace; while my eyes are cast down to the earth, in penitential confusion; or devoutly looking up to heaven for pardoning mercy!——In every friendly interview, let the “law of kindness dwell on my lips;” or rather, if the seriousness of my acquaintance permits, let the gospel of peace flow from my tongue. Oh! that I might be enabled, in every public concourse, to lift up my voice like a trumpet; and pour abroad a more joyful sound, than its most melodious accents, in proclaiming the glad tidings of free salvation!—Be shut, my ears, resolutely shut, against the malevolent whispers of slander, and the contagious breath of filthy talking: but be swift to hear the instructions of wisdom; be all attention, when your Redeemer speaks; imbibe the
precious

precious truths; and convey them carefully to the heart.—Carry me, my feet, to the temple of the LORD; to the beds of the sick; and houses of the poor.—May all my members, devoted intirely to my divine Master, be the willing instruments of promoting his glory!

THEN, ye embalmers, you may spare your pains: these works of faith, and labours of love; these shall be my spices and perfumes. Enwrapped in these, I would lay me gently down, and sleep sweetly in the blessed JESUS; hoping that God will “give
“commandment concerning my bones,” and one day fetch them up from the dust, as silver from the furnace, purified, “I say not, seven times, but,
“seventy times seven,”

HERE, my contemplation took wing; and, in an instant, alighted in the garden, adjoining to Mount Calvary. Having viewed the abode of my deceased fellow-creatures; methought, I longed to see the place, where our LORD lay.—And, Oh! what a marvellous spectacle was once exhibited, in this memorable sepulchre! he ||, “who cloathes
“himself with light, as with a garment; and
“walks upon the wings of the wind *;” was
pleased

|| Darkeness his curtain, and his bed the dust,
Tho’ sun and stars are dust beneath his throne.

Night Thoughts.

* The sacred scriptures, speaking of the Supreme Being, say—He walketh upon the waves of the sea; to denote his uncontrollable power, Job ix. 8.—He walketh in the circuit of Heaven; to express the immensity of his presence, Job xxii. 14.—He walketh upon the wings of the wind; to signify the amazing swiftness of his operations, Psal. civ. 3.—In which last phrase, there is, I think, an elegance and emphasis, not taken notice of by our commentators, and yet unequalled in any writer.—Not, he flieth; he runneth; but, he walketh: and that, on the very wings of the wind: on the most impetuous of elements, roused into its utmost rage, and sweeping along with inconceivable rapidity. A tumult in nature, not to be described, is the composed and sedate work
of

pleased to wear the habiliments of mortality, and dwelt among the prostrate dead.—Who can repeat the wondrous truth, too often? Who can dwell upon the transporting theme, too long? He, who sits enthroned in glory, and diffuses bliss among all the heavenly hosts; was once a pale and bloody corpse, and pressed this little spot.

O DEATH! how great was thy triumph in that hour! Never did thy gloomy realms contain such a prisoner before.—Prisoner, did I say? No; he was more than conqueror. He arose, far more mightily than Samson, from a transient slumber: broke down the gates, and demolished the strongholds, of those dark dominions.—And this, O mortals, this is your only consolation and security. JESUS has trod the dreadful path, and smoothed it for your passage.—JESUS, sleeping in the chambers of the tomb, has brightened this dismal mansion; and left an inviting odour, in those beds of dust. The dying JESUS (never let the comfortable truth depart from your minds! The dying JESUS) is your sure protection, your unquestionable passport, through the territories of the grave. Believe in him; and they shall prove a “highway to “Sion;” shall transmit you safe to Paradise. Believe in him; and ye shall be no losers, but unspeakable gainers, by your dissolution. For, hear what the oracle of heaven says, upon this important point: Whoso believeth in me, shall never die*.—

What

of the DEITY. A speed, not to be measured, is (with reverence I use the expression, and to comport with our low methods of conception) the solemn and majestic foot pace of JEHOVAH,—how flat are the following lines, even in the great master of Lyric song.

Ocyor cervis, & agente nimbas

Ocyor Euro,

when compared with this inimitable stroke of divine poetry!

—He walketh upon the wings of the wind.

* John xi. 26.

What sublime, and emphatical language, in this! Thus much, at least, it must import;—The
 “ nature of that last change, shall be surprisingly
 “ altered, for the better. It shall no longer be in-
 “ flicted, as a punishment; but rather vouch-
 “ safed, as a blessing: to such persons, it shall come
 “ attended, with such a train of benefits, as will
 “ render it a kind of happy impropriety, to call
 “ it dying. Dying! no; 'tis then they truly begin
 “ to live. Their exit, is the end of their frailty,
 “ and their entrance upon perfection: their last
 “ groan, is the prelude to life and immortality.”

O YE timorous souls, that are terrified at the passing-bell; that turn pale, at the sight of an opened grave; and can scarce behold a coffin, or a skull, without a shuddering horror: Ye that are in bondage to the grisly tyrant, and tremble at the shaking of his iron rod; cry mightly, to the Father of your spirits, for faith in his dear Son. Faith, will free you from your slavery *. Faith, will imbolden you to tread on (this fiercest of) serpents †. Old Simeon clasping

* Death's terror is the mountain Faith removes:

’Tis faith disarms destruction——

Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb.

These, and some other quotations, I am proud to borrow from the Night Thoughts; especially from Night the fourth: in which, energy of language, sublimity of sentiment, and the most exquisite beauties of poetry, are the least perfections to be admired: almost every line glows with devotion; rises into the most exalted apprehensions of the adorable Redeemer; and is animated with the most lively faith, in his all-sufficient mediation. The author of this excellent performance has the peculiar felicity, of ennobling all the strength of style, and every delicacy of imagination, with the grand and momentous truths of Christianity. These thoughts give the highest entertainment to the fancy; and impart the noblest improvement to the mind: they not only refine our taste, but prepare us for death, and ripen us for glory. I never take up this admirable piece; but am ready to cry out—*Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens*; i. e. “Inspire me with such a spirit, and
 “ life shall be delightful, nor death itself unwelcome.”

† Luke x. 19.

clasping the child JESUS in the arms of his flesh, and the glorious Mediator in the arms of his faith, departs with tranquility and peace. That bitter persecutor Saul having won CHRIST; being found in CHRIST; longs to be dismissed from cumbrous clay, and kindles into rapture at the prospect of dissolution*. Methinks, I see another of IMMANUEL's followers, trusting in his Saviour; leaning on his beloved; go down to the silent shades, with composure and alacrity†. In this powerful name, an innumerable company of sinful creatures have set up their banners; and "overcome, through the blood of the "Lamb." Authorized by the Captain of thy Salvation, thou also mayst set thy feet upon the neck of this king of terrors. Furnished with this antidote, thou also mayst play round the hole of the asp, and put thy undaunted hand on this cockatrice den. Thou mayst ‡ feel the viper fastening to thy mortal part, and fear no evil: thou shalt one day shake it off by a joyful resurrection, and suffer no harm.

RESURRECTION! that cheering word eases my mind of an anxious thought, and solves a most momentous question. I was going to ask, "wherefore do all these corpses lie here, in this abject condition? Is this their final state? Has death conquered? And will the tyrant hold captivity captive? How long wilt thou forget them, O LORD? For ever?"——No, saith the voice from heaven, the word of divine revelation; The righteous are all "prisoners of hope §." There is an hour (an awful secret that, and known only to all-foreseeing wisdom), an appointed hour there is, when an act of grace will pass the great seal above, and give them an universal discharge; a general delivery

* Phil. i. 23.

2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

† 2 Pet. i. 14.

‡ Acts xxviii. 3, 5.

§ Zech. ix. 12.

delivery from the abodes of corruption. Then, shall the LORD JESUS descend from heaven, with the shout of the archangel, and the trump of GOD. Destruction itself shall hear the call, and the obedient grave give up her dead. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they shake off the sleep of ten thousand years; and spring forth, like the bounding roe, to “meet their LORD in the air.”

AND, Oh! with what cordial congratulations; what transporting endearments; do the soul and body, those affectionate companions, reunite! But, with how much greater demonstrations of kindness, are they both received, by their compassionate Redeemer! The Antient of Days, who comes in the clouds of heaven, is their friend; their father; their bridegroom. They have nothing to fear, from all the pomp of his appearance. Those tremendous Solemnities, which spread desolation and astonishment thro’ the universe; serve only to inflame their love, and heighten their hopes. The Judge, the awful Judge, amidst all his magnificence and splendor, vouchsafes to confess their names; vouchsafes to commemorate their fidelity, before all the inhabitants of the skies, and the whole assembled world.

HARK! the thunders are hushed: the lightnings cease their rage: the angelic armies, stand in silent suspense: the whole race of Adam, is wrapt in pleasing, or anxious expectation.—And now, that adorable Being, whose favour is better than life; whose acceptance, is a crown of glory; lifts up the light of his countenance, upon the righteous. He speaks; and what ravishing words, proceed from his gracious lips! What ecstasies of delight, they enkindle in the breasts of the faithful! —“I accept you, O my people! Ye are they, that believed in my name. Ye are they, that renounced yourselves, and are complete in me. I
“see

“ see no spot or blemish in you; for ye are washed
 “ in my blood, and cloathed in my righteousness.
 “ Renewed by my Spirit, ye have glorified me on
 “ earth, and have been faithful unto death. Come,
 “ then, ye servants of holiness, enter into the joy
 “ of your LORD. Come, ye children of light;
 “ ye blessed of my Father; receive the kingdom,
 “ that shall never be removed: wear the crown,
 “ which fadeth not away; and enjoy pleasures for
 “ evermore!”

THEN, it will be one of the smallest privileges of the righteous, that they shall languish no more; that sickness will never again shew her pale countenance, in their dwellings*. Death itself will be “ swallowed up in victory.” That fatal javelin; which has drank the blood of monarchs, and finds its way to the hearts of all the sons of Adam, shall be utterly broken. That enormous scythe; which has struck empires from their root, and swept ages and generations into oblivion; shall lie by in perpetual uselessness. Sin, also, which filled thy quiver, thou insatiate archer!—Sin, which strung thy arm with such resistless vigour—which pointed all thy shafts with inevitable destruction—Sin, will then be done away. Whatever is frail, or depraved, will be thrown off with our grave-cloaths. All to come, is perfect excellency, and consummate happiness; the term of whose continuance is eternity.

O ETERNITY! eternity! how are our boldest, our strongest thoughts, lost and overwhelmed in thee! Who can set land-marks, to limit thy dimensions;

* Isaiah, speaking of the new Jerusalem, mentions this, as one of its immunities. “ The inhabitants thereof shall no more say, I am sick.” And another clause in its royal charter runs thus, “ God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain.” Isai. xxxiii. 24 Rev. xxi. 4.

menfions; or find plumbets, to fathom thy depths? Arithmeticians have figures, to compute all the progreflions of time: Aftronomers have instruments, to calculate the diftances of the planets: but what numbers can ftate, what lines can guage, the lengths and breadths of eternity? “It is higher
“than heaven; what canft thou do? deeper than
“hell; what canft thou know? The meafure there-
“of, is longer than the earth, broader than the
“fea*.”

MYSTERIOUS, mighty exiftence! a fum, not to be leffened by the largeft deductions: an extent not to be contracted by all poffible diminutions. None can truly fay, after the moft prodigious wafte of ages, “That fo much of eternity is gone.” For, when millions of centuries are elapfed, it is but juft commencing; and, when millions more have run their ample round, it will be no nearer ending. Yea, when ages, numerous as the bloom of fpring; increafed by the herbage of fummer; both augmented by the leaves of autumn; and all multiplied by the drops of rain, which drown the winter—when thefe, and ten thoufand times ten thoufand more—more than can be reprefented by any fimilitude, or imagined by any conception, are all revolved; eternity, vaft, boundlefs, amazing eternity, will only be beginning, or rather (if I may be allowed the expreffion) only—beginning to begin.

WHAT a pleafing, yet awful thought is this! Full of delight, and full of dread. O! may it alarm our fears; quicken our hopes; and animate all our endeavours! fince we are foon to launch into this endlefs and inconceivable ftate; let us give all diligence, to fecure our entrance into blifs. Now, let us give all diligence; becaufe there is no alteration, in the fcenes of futurity. The wheel
never

* Job xi. 8, 9.

never turns: all is steadfast and immoveable, beyond the grave. Whether we are then seated on the throne, or stretched on the rack; a seal will be set to our condition, by the hand of everlasting mercy, or inflexible justice.—The saints, always rejoice amidst the smiles of heaven; their harps are perpetually tuned; their triumphs admit of no interruption—the ruin also of the wicked is irremediable. The fatal sentence, once passed, is never to be repealed. No hope of exchanging their doleful habitations. But all things bear the same dismal aspect, forever and ever.

THE wicked*—my mind recoils, at the apprehension of their misery. It has studiously waved the fearful subject; and seems unwilling to pursue it, even now.—But 'tis better to reflect upon it, for a few minutes, than to endure it, to eternal ages. Perhaps, the consideration of their aggravated misery, may be profitably terrible: may teach me more highly to prize the Saviour, who “delivers from “going down into the bottomless pit:” may drive me, like the avenger’s sword, to this only city of refuge, for obnoxious sinners.

THE wicked seem to lie here, like malefactors, in a deep and strong dungeon; reserved against the day of trial.—“Their departure was without “peace.” Clouds of horror, sat lowering upon their closing eye-lids; most sadly foreboding, the “Blackness of darkness for ever.” When the last sickness seized their frame, and the inevitable change advanced: when they saw the fatal arrow, fitting to the strings; saw the deadly archer, aiming at their life; and felt the envenomed shaft, fastened in their vitals—Good God! what fearfulness came upon them! what horrible dread over-

F

whelmed

* —Animus meminisse horret, luctuque refugit.

Virg.

whelmed them! how did they stand shuddering, upon the tremendous precipice; excessively afraid to die, yet utterly unable to live!—O! what pale reviews; what startling prospects; conspire to augment their sorrows!—they look backward; and, behold! a most melancholy scene! sins unrepented of; mercy slighted; and the day of grace ending.—They look forward, and nothing presents itself, but the righteous Judge; the dreadful tribunal; and a most solemn reckoning—They roll around their affrighted eyes, on attending friends; and, if accomplices in debauchery, it sharpens their anguish, to consider this further aggravation of their guilt, that they have not sinned alone, but drawn others into the snare: If religious acquaintance; it strikes a fresh gash into their hearts, to think of never seeing them any more, but only at an unapproachable distance, separated by the unpassable gulph.

At last, perhaps, they begin to pray; finding no other possible way of relief, they are constrained to apply unto the Almighty: with trembling lips, and a faltering tongue, they cry unto that Sovereign Being, “who kills and makes alive.”—But why, O! why have they deferred their addresses to heaven so long? why have they despised all his counsels; and stood incorrigible, under his incessant reproofs? how often have they been forewarned of these terrors and most importunately intreated, to turn to the LORD!—I wish, they may find favour at this last hour: and, by a miracle of grace, be snatched from the very brink, the breaking brink of damnation. But alas! who can tell, whether affronted majesty, will lend an ear to their complaint? He may, for aught any mortal knows, “laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh.”

Thus they lie groaning out the poor remains of life; their limbs bathed in sweat; their heart struggling with convulsive throes; pains insupportable.

portable throbbing thro' every pulse; and innumerable darts of agony transfixing their conscience.

In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement;
Runs to each avenue; and shrieks for help;
But shrieks in vain! How wishfully she looks
On all she's leaving, now no longer her's!
A little longer, yet a little longer,
O! might she stay, to wash away her crimes,
And fit her for her passage! Mournful sight!
Her very eyes weep blood; and ev'ry groan
She heaves, is big with horror: but the foe,
Like a staunch murd'rer, steady to his purpose,
Pursues her close thro' ev'ry lane of life,
Nor misses once the tract; but presses on;
Till, forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,
At once she sinks——

The GRAVE.

If this be the end of the ungodly, “my soul,
“come not thou into their secret! unto their assembly,
“bly, mine honour, be not thou united!”—Oh!
how awfully accomplished is that prediction of inspired wisdom! “Sin, though seemingly sweet in
“the commission; in the issue biteth like a serpent,
“and stingeth like an adder.”

HAPPY dissolution! were this the period of their woes. But alas! all these tribulations, are only
“the beginning of sorrows;” one small drop of
that “cup of trembling,” which is mingled for
their future portion.—No sooner has the last pang
dislodged the reluctant soul; but they are hurried
into the presence of an injured angry God, not under
the conducting care of beneficent angels, but
exposed to the insults of accursed spirits; who lately
tempted them, now upbraid them, and will for
ever torment them.—Who can conceive their
confusion and distress; when they stand, guilty and
inexcusable, before their incensed Creator? They
are received with frowns: “the God that made
“them, has no mercy on them.” The Prince of

Peace, the fountain of felicity, rejects them with abhorrence. He consigns them over to chains and darkness, and receptacles of despair; against the severer doom, and more public infamy, of the great day. Then all the phials of wrath, will be emptied upon these wretched creatures. The law they have violated, and the gospel they have slighted; the power they have defied, and the goodness they have abused; will all get themselves honour in their exemplary destruction. Then GOD, the GOD to whom vengeance belongeth, will draw the arrow to the very head, and set them as the mark of his inexorable displeasure.

RESURRECTION, will be no privilege to them; but immortality itself, their everlasting curse.—Would they not bless the grave, “that land where all things are forgotten;” and wish to lie, eternally hid, in its deepest gloom? but the dust refuses, to conceal their persons; or draw a veil, over their practices. They also must awake; must arise; must appear at the bar; and meet the Judge: a judge, before whom “the pillars of heaven tremble, and the earth melts away.” A Judge, once long-suffering, and very compassionate; but now unalterably determined, to teach stubborn offenders,—what it is, to provoke the omnipotent God: what it is to trample upon the blood of his Son: and offer despite to all the gracious overtures of his Spirit.

OH! the perplexity! the distraction! that must confound the impenitent rebels; when they are summoned, to the great tribunal! “what can they do, in this day of severe visitation?” This day of final decision?—Where? How? From whence can they find help?—To which of the saints will they turn? Whither betake themselves for shelter?—Alas! ’tis all in vain; ’tis all too late—friends and acquaintance know them no more: heaven and earth abandon them, to their approaching doom: and even the Mediator, the MEDIATOR himself, deserts

deserts them in this dreadful hour.—To fly, will be impracticable: to justify themselves, still more impossible: and now, to make any supplications, utterly unavailable.

BEHOLD! the books are opened: the secrets of all hearts are disclosed: the hidden things of darkness, are brought to light. How empty, how ineffectual, are all those refined artifices; with which hypocrites imposed upon their fellow-creatures, and preserved a character in the sight of men! the jealous God, who has been about their path, and about their bed, and spied out all their ways, “sets before them the things that they have done.” They cannot answer him one in a thousand, nor stand in the awful judgment. They are speechless with guilt, and stigmatized with infamy, before all the angels of light. What a favour would they esteem it; to hide their ashamed heads, in the bottom of the ocean; or even to be buried, beneath the ruins of the tottering world!

If the contempt, poured upon them, be so insupportable; O! “how will their hearts endure,” when the sword of infinite indignation is unsheathed; and fiercely waved, around their defenceless heads; or pointed directly, at their naked breasts! how much the wretches scream with wild amazement, and dent the very heavens with their cries, when “the right aiming thunderbolts go abroad!” go abroad with a dreadful commission, do drive them from the kingdoms of glory; and plunge them, not into the sorrows of a moment, or the tortures of an hour; but into all the restless agonies of unquenchable fire, and everlasting despair.*

MISERY of miseries! too shocking for reflection to dwell upon. But, if so dismal to foresee; and that

* Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes,
That comes to all: but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsum'd.

that at a distance, together with some comfortable expectation of escaping it—O! how bitter, how inconceivably bitter, to bear; without any intermission; or any mitigation; through hopeless and eternal ages.

WHO has any bowels of pity?—Who has any sentiments of compassion?—Who has any tender concern for his fellow-creatures? Who? In God's Name, and for CHRIST's Sake, let him shew it; by warning every man, and beseeching every man, to seek the LORD while he may be found: to throw down the arms of rebellion, before the act of indemnity expires: submissively to adore the Lamb, while he holds out the golden sceptre.—Here, let us act the friendly part to mankind: here, let the whole force of our benevolence exert itself: in exhorting, whomsoever we are likely to influence, to take the wings of faith unfeigned; of repentance undelayed, and “flee away from this wrath “to come.”

UPON the whole; what stupendous discoveries are these! lay them up in a faithful remembrance, O my soul. Recollect them, with the most serious attention; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. When thou walkest, receive them for thy companions; when thou talkest, listen to them as thy prompters; and whatever thou doest, consult them as thy directors. Influenced by these considerations, thy views will greaten: thy affections be exalted; and thou thyself raised above the tantalizing power of perishing things. Duly mindful of these, it will be the sum of thy desires, and scope of thy endeavours, to gain the approbation of that sovereign being; who will then fill the throne, and pronounce the decisive sentence. Thou wilt see nothing worth a wish*, in comparison of
having

* Great day of dread, decision, and despair!

At thought of thee, each sublunary wish

Lets go its eager grasp, and quits the world.

Night Thoughts.

having his will for thy rule; his glory for thy aim; and his holy Spirit for thy ever-actuating principle.

WONDER, O man; be lost in admiration; at those prodigious events, which are coming upon the universe: events, the greatness of which, nothing finite can measure. Such, as will cause whatever is considerable or momentous, in the annals of all generations, to sink into littleness and nothing: Events (JESUS, prepare us for their approach; defend us, when they take place!) big with the everlasting fates of all the living, and all the dead.—I must see the graves cleaving; the sea teeming and swarms unsuspected, crowds unnumbered, yea, multitudes of thronging nations, rising from both.—I must see the world in flames; must stand at the dissolution of all terrestrial things; and be an attendant, on the burial of nature.—I must see the vast expanse of the sky, wrapt up like a scroll; and the incarnate God, issuing forth from light inaccessible, with ten thousand times ten thousand angels, to judge both men and devils.—I must see the curtain of time drop; see all eternity disclosed to view; and enter upon a state of being, that will never, never have an end.

AND ought I not (let the vainest imagination judge; ought I not) to try the sincerity of my faith, and take heed to my ways? Is there an inquiry; is there a care, of greater, of equal, of comparable importance?—Is not this an infinitely pressing call, to see that my loins are girded about; my lamp trimmed; and myself dressed for the “Bridegroom’s appearance?” That, washed in the fountain opened in my Saviour’s side, and clad with the marriage-garment wove by his obedience; I may “be found in peace, unblameable, and unreprou-able.”—Otherwise, how shall I stand with boldness; when the stars of heaven, fall from their orbs? How shall I come forth erect and courageous; when the earth itself reels to-and-fro like a drunkard*?

How

* Isai. xxiv. 20.

How shall I look up with joy, and see my salvation drawing nigh; when the hearts of millions fail for fear.

Now, Madam, lest my Meditations set in a cloud, and leave any unpleasing gloom upon your mind; let me once more turn, to the brightening prospects of the righteous. A view of them, and their delightful expectations, may serve to exhilarate the thoughts; that have been musing upon melancholy subjects, and hovering about the edges of infernal darkness; Just as a spacious field arrayed in cheerful green, relieves and re-invigorates the eye; that has fatigued itself by pouring upon some minute, or gazing upon some glaring object.

THE righteous seem to lie by, in the bosom of the earth, as a wary pilot in some well-sheltered creek; till all the storms, which infest the lower world, are blown over. Here they enjoy safe anchorage; are in no danger of foundering, amidst the seas of prevailing iniquity; or of being shipwrecked, on the rocks of any powerful temptation. But ere-long, we shall behold them hoisting their flag of hope; riding before a sweet gale of atoning merit, and redeeming love; till they make with all the sails of an assured faith, the blessed port of eternal life.

THEN, may the honoured friend, to whom I am writing; rich in good works; rich in heavenly tempers; but inexpressibly richer in her Saviour's righteousness—O! may she enter the harbour, like a gallant stately vessel; returned successful and victorious, from some grand expedition; with acclamations, honour, and joy! While my little bark, attendant on the solemnity, and a partaker of the triumph, glides humbly after; and both rest together in the heaven,—the wished for, blissful haven, of perfect security, and everlasting repose.

REFLECTIONS

R E F L E C T I O N S

O N A

F L O W E R - G A R D E N .

In a LETTER to a LADY.

I look upon the pleasure, which we take in a Garden, as one of the most innocent delights in human life. A Garden was the habitation of our first parents before the fall. It is naturally apt to fill the mind with calmness and tranquility, and to lay all its turbulent passions at rest. It gives us a great insight into the contrivance, and wisdom of Providence, and suggests innumerable subjects for Meditation.

Spect. Vol. VII. No. 477.

MADAM,

SOME time ago, my Meditations took a turn among the Tombs: they visited the awful and melancholy mansions of the dead: * And you were pleased to favour them, with your attention.—May I, now, beg the honour of your company, in a more inviting and delightful excursion? In a beautiful flower-garden: where I lately walked, and at once regaled the sense, and indulged the fancy.

IT

* “ Discourses on the vanity of the creature, which represent the barrenness of every thing in this world, and its incapacity of producing any solid or substantial happiness, are useful.—Those speculations also, which shew the bright side of things, and lay forth those innocent entertainments, which are to be met with among the several objects that encompass us, are no less beneficial.” Spect. Vol. V. No. 393. Upon the plan of these observations, the preceding and following reflections are formed,

It was early in a summer morning; when the air was cool; the earth moist; the whole face of the creation fresh and gay. The noisy world was scarce awake. Business had not quite shook off his sound sleep; and riot had but just reclined his giddy head. All was serene: All was still: Every thing tended to inspire tranquility of mind, and invite to serious thought.

ONLY the wakeful lark had left her nest, and was mounting on high, to salute the opening day. Elevated in air, she seemed to call the laborious husbandman to his toil, and all her fellow songsters to their notes.—Earliest of birds, said I, companion of the dawn, may I always rise at thy voice! rise, to offer the morn-song; and adore that beneficent being, “who maketh the out-goings of “the morning and evening to rejoice.”

O! how charming to rove abroad, at this sweet hour of prime! to enjoy the calm of Nature; to tread the dewy lawns; and taste the unruffled freshness of the air!

Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds.*

What a pleasure do the sons of sloth lose! Little, ah! little is the sluggard sensible, how delicious an entertainment he foregoes, for the poorest of all animal gratifications.

THE Greynefs of the dawn decays gradually. Abundance of ruddy streaks, tinge the fleeces of the firmament. Till at length, the dappled aspect of the east, is lost in an ardent and universal, blush.—Is it the surmise of imagination, or do the skies really redden with shame: to see so many supinely stretched, on their drowsy pillows?—Shall man be lost, in luxurious ease? Shall man waste these pre-
cious

* Milt. Par. Lost. B. IV. l. 641.

cious hours, in idle slumbers? While the vigorous sun is up, and going on his Maker's errand? While all the feathered choir are hymning the Creator, and paying their homage in harmony? Oh! no. Let him heighten the melody of the tuneful tribes, by adding the rational strains of devotion. Let him improve the fragrant oblations of nature, by mingling, with the rising odours, the more refined breath of praise.

'Tis natural for man to look upward *; to throw his first glance upon the objects, that are above him.

Strait towards heav'n my wond'ring eyes I turn'd,
And gaz'd awhile the ample Sky †.

PRODIGIOUS theatre! where lightnings dart the fire, and thunders utter their voice: where tempests spend their rage, and worlds unnumbered roll at large!—Oh the greatness of that mighty hand; which meteth out this amazing circumference, with a span! Oh the immensity of that wonderful being; before whom this unmeasurable extent, is no more than a point!—And Oh (thou pleasing thought) the unsearchable riches of that mercy, which is ‡ greater than the heavens! Is more extensive and unbounded, in its gracious exercise; than these illimitable tracts of air, and sea, and firmament! that pardons crimes of the most enormous size, and most horrid aggravations; pardons them, in consideration of the Redeemer's atonement, with perfect freeness, and the utmost readiness! more readily, if it were possible, than this all surrounding expanse admits, within its circuit, a ridge of mountains, or even a grain of sand.

O! COME

* Os homini sublimē dedit, cœlumque tueri
Jussit, & erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.

Ovid.

† Milt. Par. B. VIII. l. 257.

‡ Psalm cviii. 4.

O! COME hither, then ye awakened, trembling sinners. Come*, weary and heavy-laden, with a sense of your iniquities. Condemn yourselves. Renounce all reliance on any thing of your own. Let your trust be in the tender mercy of God, for ever and ever.

IN them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.— Behold him coming forth, from the chambers of the east. See! the clouds, like floating curtains, are thrown back at his approach. With what resplendent majesty does he walk abroad! How transcendently bright in his countenance; shedding day, and inexhaustible light, through the universe! Is there a scene, though finished by the most elaborate and costly refinements of human art, “ comparable to these illustrious solemnities of opening sun-
“ shine? Before these, all the studied pageantry of
“ the theatre! the glittering œconomy of an as-
“ sembly; or even the heightened ornaments of
“ a royal palace; hide their diminished heads, and
“ shrink

* The lines that follow, are admirably descriptive of the spirit and practice hinted above. In them desire pants; prayer wrestles; and faith, as it were, grasps the prize.— I take leave to transplant them into this place, because they have the misfortune to grow in a very obscure situation. Their native soil, is no other than the lamentation of a sinner, written by Mr. Sternhold. Notwithstanding the unpromising Genius of the performance, I think, we may challenge the greatest masters, to produce any thing more spirited, and important: more full of nature, or more flushed with life,

Mercy, good LORD, Mercy I crave;

This is the total sum;

For mercy, LORD, is all my suit;

LORD, let thy mercy come.

The short sentences—Not a single copulative—The frequent repetition of the divine name—The almost incessant reiteration of the blessing, so earnestly desired; so infinitely needed.—These are the genuine language of ardour; are beauties obvious to every eye; and cannot fail, either to please the judicious taste, or to edify the gracious heart.

“ shrink into nothing.”—I have read of a person, so struck with the splendors of this noble luminary; that he imagined himself made on purpose to contemplate its glories. O! that christians would adopt his persuasion, and transfer it to the Sun of Righteousness! Thus applied, it would cease to be a chimerical notion, and become a most important truth. For sure I am, it is the supreme happiness, of the eternal state; and therefore may well be the ruling concern, of this present life; “ to know the only true God, “ and JESUS CHRIST, whom he “ hath sent.”—Nor do I stand alone in this opinion. One of the most unquestionable judges, of whatever is valuable in science, or perfective of our nature; a judge, who formed his taste on the maxims of paradise, and received the finishings of his education in the third heavens; this judge, determines to know nothing “ but JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.” He possessed, in his own person, the finest, the most admired accomplishments; and yet pronounces them no better than dung, in comparison of the * super-eminent excellency of this saving knowledge.

METHINKS, I discern a thousand admirable properties in the sun. 'Tis, certainly, the best material emblem of the Creator. There is more of God in its lustre, energy, and usefulness, than in any other visible being. To worship it as a deity, was the least inexcusable of all the heathen idolatries. One scarce can wonder that fallen reason should mistake so fair a copy, for the adorable original. No comparison, in the whole book of sacred wisdom, pleases me more; than that which resembles the blessed JESUS, to yonder regent of the day †: Who now advances on his azure road, to scatter light and gladness through the nations.

WHAT

* Το υπερεχον της γνωσεως.

† Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in his wings. Mal. iv. 2.

WHAT were all the realms of the world, but a dungeon of darkness, without the beams of the sun? All their fine scenes, hid under shades, lost in obscurity.—In vain, we roll around our eyes in the midnight gloom: In vain, we strive to behold the features of amiable nature: Turn whither we will, no form or comeliness appear: All seems a dreary waste; an undistinguished chaos; till the returning hours, have unbarred the gates of light, and let forth the morn.—Then, what a prospect opens! the heavens are paved with azure and strewn with roses. A variety of the liveliest verdurs, array the plains. The flowers put on a glow, of the richest colours. The whole creation stands forth, dressed in all the charms of beauty. The ravished eye looks round, and wonders.

AND what had been the condition of our intellectual nature, without the great Redeemer, and his divine revelation? Alas! What absurd and unworthy apprehensions, did the pagan fables form of God! What idle dreams, what childish conjectures, were their doctrines of a future state! And how did the bulk, even of that favoured nation, the Jews, weary themselves in very vanity, to obtain peace and reconciliation with their offended JEHOVAH! Till JESUS arose upon our benighted minds, and brought life and immortality to light; till he arose, “to enlighten the wretched “Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel!”—Now, we no longer cry out, with a restless impatience, “Where is God my Maker?” For we are allowed to contemplate the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, “in “the face of JESUS CHRIST.”—Now, we no longer inquire, with an unsatisfied solicitude, “Which “is the way to bliss?” Because JESUS has marked the path, by his shining example; and left us an unerring clue, in his holy word.—Now, we have

have no more reason to proceed with misgiving hearts, in our journey to eternity; or to ask anxiously, as we go, "Who will roll away the stone, " and open the everlasting doors? Who will re-
" move the flaming sword, and give us admission
" into the delights of Paradise?" For it is done, all done, by the Captain of our Salvation. Sin he has expiated, by the unblemished sacrifice of himself. The law he has fulfilled, by his perfect obedience. The Sinner he transforms, by his sanctifying SPIRIT.—In a word; he hath both presented us with a clear discovery, of good things to come; and administered to us an abundant entrance, into the final enjoyment of them.

WHENEVER, therefore, we bless God for the circling seasons, and revolving day; let us adore, thankfully adore him, for the more precious appearance of the Sun of Righteousness, and his glorious gospel. Without which, we should have been groping, even to this hour, in spiritual darkness, and the shadow of death: without which, we must have been bewildered in a maze of inextricable uncertainties; and have " stumbled upon the dark
" mountains" of error, till we fell into the bottomless pit of perdition.

WITHOUT that grand enlivening principle, what were this earth, but a lifeless mass? a rude lump of inactive matter? The trees could never break forth into leaves, nor the plants spring up into flowers. We should no more behold the meadows, mantled over with green; nor the valleys, standing thick with corn. Or, to speak in the beautiful language of a prophet, " * No longer would
" the fig-tree blossom, nor fruit be on the vine: the
" labour of the olive would fail, and the fields
" could yield no meat: the flocks must be cut off
" from the fold, and there would be no herd in the
" stalls." This darts its beams among all the vegetable

getable tribes; and paints the spring, and enriches the autumn. This pierces to the roots of the vineyard, and the orchard; and sets a-float those fermenting juices, which at length burst into floods of wine, or bend the boughs with a mellow load.—Nor are its favours confined to the upper regions; but distributed even unto the deepest recesses of creation. It penetrates the beds of metals, and finds its way to “the place of the sapphires.” It tinctures the seeds of gold, that are ripening into ore; and throws a brilliancy into the water of the diamond, that is hardening on its rock.—In short; the beneficial agency of this magnificent luminary, is inexpressible. It beautifies, and impregnates, universal nature. “There is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”

Just in the same manner, were the rational world dead in trespasses and sins, without the reviving energy of JESUS CHRIST. He is “the resurrection, and the life:” The all-powerful cause of the one, and overflowing fountain of the other. “The second Adam is a quickening spirit,” and all his saints live through him. He shines upon their affections; and they shoot forth into heavenly graces, and abound in the fruits of righteousness. Faith unfeigned, and love undissembled, those noblest productions of the renewed nature, are the effect of his operations on the mind. Not so much as one divine disposition could spread itself, not one christian habit unfold and flourish, without the kindly influences of his grace.

As there is no fruitfulness, so likewise no chearfulness *, without the sun.—When that auspicious sovereign of the day, diffuses the mildness of his morning

* “The sun, which is as the great soul of the universe, and produces all the necessities of life, has a particular influence in chearing the mind of man, and making the heart glad.” Spect. Vol. V. No. 387.

morning splendors; all creatures are enlivened by his presence, are gladdened with his gifts. Millions of glittering insects awake into existence, and bask in his rays. The birds start from their slumbers, and pour their delighted souls in harmony. The flocks, with bleating accents, hail the welcome blessing. The herds, in lowing murmurs, express their hoarser acclamations. The valleys ring with rural music: the hills echo back the artless strains. All that is vocal, joins in the general choir: all that has breath, exults in the cheering influence.—Whereas, let that radiant orb be eclipsed, only for a few minutes; and all nature, immediately, assumes an air of sadness. The heavens put on a kind of mourning. The most sprightly animals droop their wings, or hang down their dejected heads. The songsters of the grove are struck dumb. The voice of joy ceases. Howling beasts roam abroad for prey: Ominous birds come forth and screech: the heart of man fails, and a chilling horror seizes the foreboding mind.—So, when CHRIST hides away his face; when faith loses sight of that consolation of Israel; Oh! how gloomy are the prospects of the soul! our God seems to be a consuming fire, and our sins cry loudly for vengeance. The thoughts bleed inwardly; the christian walks heavily; all without is irksome; all within is disconsolate.—Lift up then, most gracious JESUS, thou nobler day-spring from on high! O lift up the light of thy countenance, upon thy people! Reveal the fulness of thy mediatorial sufficiency; make clear our title to this great salvation; and thereby impart

What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,

The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt

Joy.

Pope.

In one instance more, let me pursue the similitude.
The sun, I observe, shoots his beams every way;

G

both

both backwards and forwards; to every point in the compass, as well as to every quarter under heaven. The east reddens, with his rising radiance; and the western hills are gilded with his streaming splendors. The chilly regions of the north, are cheared by his genial warmth; while the southern tracts, glow with his fire.—Thus, are the influences of the Sun of Righteousness, diffusive and unconfined. The generations of old felt them; and generations yet unborn, will rejoice in them. The merits of his precious death extended to the first, and will be propagated to the last ages of mankind.—May they, ere long, visit the remotest climates, and darkest corners of the earth! Command thy gospel, blessed Jesus, thy everlasting gospel, to take the wings of the morning, and travel with yonder sun. Let it fly upon strong pinions among every people, nation, and language: that where the heat broils, and the cold freezes, thou mayest be known, confessed, and adored: That strangers to thy name, and enemies to thy doctrines, may be enlightened with the knowledge, and won to the love, of thy Truth! O may that best of æras come; that wished for period advance; when “ All the ends of the
 “ world shall remember themselves, and be turned
 “ unto the LORD; and all the kindreds of the na-
 “ tions worship before him!”

FROM the heavens, we retire to the earth.—
 Here, the drops of dew, like so many liquid crystals*, sparkle upon the eye. How brilliant, and unfullied, is their lustre! How little inferior to the proud stone, that irradiates a monarch's crown! They want nothing but solidity, and permanency, to equal them with the finest treasures, of the jeweller's casket.—But here, indeed, they are greatly deficient; short-lived ornaments; possessed of little more, than a momentary radiancy. The sun, that
 lights

* Now morn, her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
 Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl.

lights them up, will soon exhale them. Within another hour, we may "look for their place, and they shall be away."—Oh! may every good resolution of mine, and of my flocks; may our united breathings after God, not be like these transient decorations of the morning; but like the substantial glories of the growing day! These shine more and more, with augmented splendors; while those, having glittered gaily for a little while, disappear, and are lost.

How sensibly has this dew refreshed the vegetable kingdoms! The fervent heat of yesterday's sun, had almost parched the face, and exhausted the sweets of nature. But, what a sovereign restorative, are these cooling distillations of the night! How they gladden, and invigorate, the languishing herbs! Sparkled with these reviving drops, their verdure deepens; their bloom is new flushed; their fragrance, faint or intermitted, becomes potent and copious.—So, does the ever-blessed SPIRIT revive the drooping troubled conscience of a sinner. When that almighty comforter shed his sweet influence on the soul; displays the all-sufficient sacrifice of a Divine Redeemer; and "witnesses with our Spirit," that we are interested in the Saviour, and, by this means, are children of GOD; then, what a pleasing change ensues! Former anxieties are remembered no more. Every uneasy apprehension vanishes. Soothing hopes and delightful expectations, succeed. The countenance drops its dejected mien; the eyes brighten with a lively cheerfulness; while the lips express the heart-felt satisfaction, in the language of thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.—In this sense, merciful God, be as the dew unto Israel! "Pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing." And oh! let not my fleece be dry, while heavenly benediction descends upon all around.

Who can number these pearly drops? They hang on every hedge; twinkle from every spray; and adorn the whole herbage of the field. Not a

blade of grass, not a single leaf, but wears these watery pendants. So vast is the profusion, that it baffles the arithmetician's art.—Here let the benevolent breast contemplate, with delight, that emphatical scripture; which describes the increase of the Messiah's kingdom, from this elegant similitude. The royal prophet, speaking of CHRIST, and foretelling the success of his religion, has this remarkable expression *, The dew of thy birth is of

* Psalm cx. 3. טֶהֱם קִשְׁתָּ לִּי מִלֵּי יָקָר. The most exact translation of this difficult passage is, I apprehend, as follows; *præ rore uteri auroræ, tibi est ros juventulis vel proliis tuæ.* The dew of thy birth is larger, more copious, than the dew which proceeds from the womb of the morning.—I cannot acquiesce in the new version; because that disjoins the womb of the morning, from; The dew of thy birth: Whereas they seem to have a clear affinity, and close connection. The womb of the morning is with abundance of elegance, applied to the conception and protection of dews; agreeably to a delicate line, in that great master of just description, and lively painting, Mr. Thomson:

The meek-ey'd morn appears, mother of dews.

Summer.

Job, I remember, hath a fine expression, that may serve to confirm this remark; and illustrate the propriety of the phrase used in this connection: "Hath the rain a father, or who hath begotten the drops of dew?" It seems, the oriental writers delighted to represent the dew, as a kind of birth, as the offspring of the morning. And if so, surely there could be no image in the whole compass of the universe, better adapted to the psalmist's purpose; or more strongly significant of those multitudes of proselytes which were "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" by the powerful energy of his word and Spirit.—Upon this supposition, the whole verse describes

The willing subjection,
The gracious accomplishments, } of Christ's Converts.
And the vast number,

q. d. In the day of thy power, when thy glorious gospel shall be published in the world, and accompanied with marvellous efficacy——In that memorable period, the people, discontinuing

of the womb of the morning; (i. e.) As the morning is the mother of dews; produces them, as it were, from a prolific womb; and scatters them with the most lavish abundance, over all the surface

ing the former oblations, commanded under the Mosaic law; shall devote themselves, as so many living sacrifices, to thy honour. Not constrained by force, but charmed with thy excellency, they shall come in volunteers to thy service, and be free-will-offerings in thy church.—Neither shall they be “empty vines”, or bare professors; but shall walk in all the beauties of holiness, and bring forth such amiable fruit, as will adorn the doctrine they embrace.——And, what is still more desirable, they shall be as numerous, as they are willing and holy, born to thee in numbers, even more immense and inconceivable, than the drops of dew, which are begotten by the night, and issue from the womb of the recent morning.

By this interpretation, the text, I think, is cleared of its obscurity, and appears both truly sublime, and perfectly just.

May I be pardoned the digression, and acquitted from presumption, if, on this occasion, I take leave to animadvert upon what seems harsh and unnatural in the common exposition of the last verse of this psalm? All the commentators (at least, all that I have had opportunity to consult,) inform their readers, that to drink of the brook in the way, signifies to undergo sufferings and death: Which, in my opinion, is a construction extremely forced, and hardly supportable; altogether remote from the import of such poetical forms of diction, usual among the eastern nations. In those sultry climes, nothing in the world could be more welcome to the traveller, than a brook streaming near his paths. To quench his thirst, and lave his feet in the cooling current, was one of the greatest refreshments imaginable, and re-animated him to pursue his journey. For which reason, among others, Brooks are a very favourite image with the inspired penman; used to denote a situation fertile and delightful, or a state of pleasure and satisfaction; but never, that I can recollect, to picture out the contrary condition of tribulation and distress.

The water-floods, indeed, in the sacred writings, often represent some imminent danger, or grievous affliction. But then they are not——*נהלים מרדד*——Streams so calm, that they keep within their banks, and glide quietly by the traveller's footsteps; so clear, that they are fit for the way-faring man's use, and invite his lips to a draught; both which notions are plainly implied in the text. They are rather——*משברי*——boisterous

face of the Earth: So shall thy seed be, O thou everlasting Father! By the preaching of thy word, shall such an innumerable race of regenerate children be born unto thee, and fill all lands. Millions, millions of willing Converts, shall croud into thy family, and replenish thy Church; till they become like the stars of heaven, or the sands of the sea, for multitude; or even as numberless as these fine spang'es, which now cover the face of nature.

——Behold

boisterous billows; bursting over a ship, or dashing themselves, with dreadful impetuosity, upon the shore: Or—שבלת—sweeping inundations; that drown the neighbouring country, and bear down all before them—besides, in these instances of horror, we never find the word—ישרה—"He shall drink;" which conveys a pleasing idea (unless, when it relates to a cup, filled with bitter intoxicating, or impoisoned liquors, a case quite different from that under consideration); but either—נעת—which imports terror and astonishment, or else—שנק and עגר—which signify to rush upon; to overwhelm; and even to bury under the waves.

Upon the whole: May not the passage more properly allude to the influences of the Holy Ghost? which were communicated, in unmeasurable degrees, to our great high-priest; and were, in fact, the cause of his surmounting all difficulties—these are frequently represented by waters; "Whoso believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters." And the enjoyment of them is described by drinking; "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst."—Then the sense may run in this well-connected and perspicuous manner. If it be asked, how shall the Redeemer be able to execute the various and important offices, foretold in the preceding parts of the psalm? the prophet replies, he shall drink of the brook in the way. He shall not be left barely to his human nature, which must unavoidably sink under the tremendous work of recovering a lost world: But, thro' the whole course of his incarnate state, thro' the whole administration of his mediatorial kingdom, shall be supported with omnipotent succours. He shall drink at the brook of almighty power, and travel on in the greatness of an uncreated strength.—Therefore shall he lift up his head. By this means, shall he be equal to the prodigious test, and superior to all opposition. By this means, shall he be thoroughly successful, in whatever he undertakes; and greatly triumphant over all his enemies.

—Behold then, ye obstinately wicked, though you “are not gathered, yet will the Saviour be “glorious.” His design shall not miscarry, nor his labour prove abortive; tho’ you render it of none effect, with regard to yourselves. Think not, that IMMANUEL will want believers, or Heaven inhabitants, because you continue incorrigible. No; the Lamb that was slain, will “see of the travail of “his soul, and be satisfied;” in a never failing series of faithful people below, and an immense choir of glorified Saints above: who shall form his retinue, and surround his throne, in shining and triumphant armies, such as no man can number.

HERE, I was reminded of the various expedients which providence, unsearchably wise, uses, to fructify both the material and intellectual world.

—Sometimes, you shall have impetuous and heavy showers, bursting from the angry clouds. They lash the plains, and make the rivers foam. A storm brings them, and a deluge follows them.—At other times, these gentle dews are formed, in the serene evening air; they steal down by soft degrees, and with insensible stillness; so subtle, that they deceive the nicest eye; so silent, that they escape the most delicate ear.—Yet, these very different operations, concur in the same beneficial end; and impart fertility to the lap of nature.—So, some have I known, reclaimed from the unfruitful works of darkness, by violent and severe means. The almighty addressed their stubborn hearts, as he addressed the Israelites at Sinai, with lightning in his eyes, and thunder in his voice. The mind, smit with a sense of guilt, and apprehensive of eternal vengeance, trembled through all her powers; just as that strong mountain tottered to its centre. Pangs and agonies preceded their new birth. They travelled in pain, and were reduced to the forest extremities, before they found rest to their souls.—Others have been recovered from a vain conversation,

conversation, by methods more mild and attractive. The Father of spirits applied himself to their tender consciences, in "a still and small voice." His grace came down, as the rain into a fleece of wool; or as these softening drops, that now water the earth. The kingdom of God took place in their hearts, without noise or observation. They passed from death unto life, from a carnal to a regenerate state, by almost imperceptible advances. The transition resembled the growth of corn: was very visible, ~~when~~ affected; though scarce sensible, while accomplishing.—O thou author and finisher of our faith, recal us from our wanderings, and re-unite us to thyself! Whether thou alarm us with thy terrors, or allure us with thy smiles; whether thou drive us with the scourges of conviction, or draw us with the cords of love: let us, in any-wise, return to thee; for thou art our supreme good; thou art our only happiness.

BEFORE I proceed further, let me ascend the terrace, and take one survey of the neighbouring country.—O! What a prospect rushes upon my sight; how vast; how various; how "full and "plenteous with all manner of store!" Nature's whole wealth!—What a rich and inexhaustible magazine is here; furnishing subsistence for every creature! Methinks, I read, in these spacious volumes, a most lively comment, upon that noble celebration of the Divine Beneficence; "he openeth "his hand, and filled all things living with p'enteousness."

These are thy glorious works, parent of good,
Almighty! Thine this universal frame.

Thus wond'rous fair! Thyself how wond'rous
then! MILT.

The fields are covered deep, and stand thick,
with corn. They expand the milky grain to the
sun; in order to receive from his beams, a more
firm

firm consistence, and a golden hue: that they may be qualified, to fill the husbandman's barn with plenty, and his heart with gladness.

YONDER lie the meadows, smoothed into a perfect level; decorated with an embroidery of the gayest flowers; and loaded with * spontaneous crops of herbage: which, converted into hay, will prove a most commodious provision for the barrenness of winter; will supply with fodder our serviceable animals, when all the verdure of the plain is killed by frosts, or buried in snows.—A winding stream glides along the flowery margin; and receives the image of the bending skies, and waters the roots of many a branching willow. 'Tis stocked, no doubt, with variety of fish; that afford a solitary diversion to the angler, and nourish for his table a delicious treat. Nor is it the only merit of this liquid element, to maintain the finny nations; it also carries cleanliness, and dispenses fruitfulness, where-ever it rolls the crystal current:

THE pastures, with their verdent mounds, chequer the prospect: and prepare a standing repast for our cattle. There, “our oxen are made strong
“to labour; and our sheep bring forth thousands,
“and ten thousands. There, the horse acquires vigour, for the dispatch of our business, and speed, to expedite our journeys. From thence, the kine bring home their udders, distended with one of the richest, and healthiest liquors, in the world.

ON several spots, a grove of trees like some grand colonnade, erects its towering head. Every one projects a friendly shade for the beasts; and creates a hospitable lodging, for the birds. Every one stands ready, to furnish timber for a palace;
masts

* ——— Injussa virescunt
Gramina ———

Virg.

masts for a navy; or, with a more condescending courtesy, fuel for our hearths.—One of them seems skirted with a wild uncultivated heath; which, like well disposed shades in painting, throws an additional lustre on the more ornamented parts of the landscape. Nor is its usefulness, like that of a soil, relative only, but real. There, several valuable creatures are produced, and accommodated; without any expence, or care of ours. There likewise, spring abundance of those herbs, which assuage the smart of our wounds, and allay the fiery tumults of the fever; which impart floridity to our circulating fluids, add a more vigorous tone to our active solids; and, thereby, repair the decays of our enfeebled constitution.

NEARER the houses, one perceives a spacious spread of branches; not so stately as the oaks, but more amiable for their annual services. A little while ago, I beheld them; and all was one beautiful, boundless, waste of blossoms. The eye marvelled at the lovely sight; and the heart rejoiced, in the prospect of autumnal plenty. But now, the blooming maid is resigned, for the useful matron: The flower is fallen, and the fruit swells out on every twig.—Breathe soft, ye winds! Oh, spare the tender fruitage, ye surly blasts! Let the pear-tree suckle her juicy progeny; till they drop into our hands, and dissolve in our mouths. Let the plum hang unmolested upon her boughs; till she fatten her delicious flesh, and cloud her polished skin with blue. And as for the apples, that staple commodity of our orchards, let no injurious shocks precipitate them immaturally to the ground; till revolving suns, have tinged them with ruddy complexion, and concocted them into an exquisite flavour. Then, what innumerable classes, of what burnished rinds, and what delighted relishes, will replenish the store-room! Some to present us with an early entertainment, and refresh our palates

palates amidst the sultry heats; some, to borrow ripeness from the falling snows, and carry autumn into the depths of winter: Some, to adorn the salver, make a part of the dessert, and give an agreeable * close to our feasts: Others, to fill our vats with a foaming flood; which, mellowed by age, may sparkle in the glass, with a liveliness and delicacy, little inferior to the blood of the grape.

I OBSERVE several small inclosures, which seem to be apprehensive of some hostile visit from the north; and, therefore, are defended, on that quarter, by a thick wood, or a lofty wall: at the same time, they cultivate an uninterrupted correspondence with the south; and throw open their whole dimensions, to its friendly warmth. One, in particular, lies, within the reach of a distinguishing view; and proves to be an olitory. It looks, methinks, like a plain and frugal republic. Whatever may resemble the pomp of courts, or the ensigns of royalty, is banished from this humble community. None of the productions of the kitchen garden affect finery, but all are habited with perfect decency. Here, those celebrated qualities are eminently united. The utmost simplicity with the exactest neatness †.—A skilful hand has parcelled out the whole ground, into narrow beds, and intervening alleys. The same discreet management has assigned to each family, a proper and distinct abode. So that there is no confusion, amidst a great multitude; because every individual is associated with propriety, and all the tribes are ranged with regularity.—But, if it be pleasing to behold their orderly situation, and their modest beauties; how delightful, to consider the advantages, they yield! What a fund of choice accommodations is here! What a source of wholesome dainties! and all,

* ———Ah ovo

Usque ad mala.——

† Simplex munditiis.

Hor.

Hor.

all, for the enjoyment of man. Why does the parfly, with her irizzled locks, shagg the border, or why the celery, with her whitening arms, perforate the mould; but to render his soups savoury? The asparagus shoots its tapering stems, to offer him the first-fruits of the season; and the artichock spreads its turgid top, in order to give him a treat of vegetable marrow. The tendrils of the * cucumber creep into the sun; and, though basking in its hottest rays, they secrete for their master, and barrel up for his use, the most cooling juices of the soil. The beans stand firm, like files of embattled troops; the pease rest upon their props, like so many companies of invalids; while both replenish their pods with the fatness of the earth, on purpose to pour it on their owner's table.—Not one species, among all this variety of herbs, is a cumberer of the ground. Not a single plant, but is good for food, or some way salutary. And, with so beneficent an œconomy, are the several periods of their ministration settled; that no portion of the year is left destitute of such nourishing esculents, as are best suited to the temperature of the air, and the state of our bodies.—O! why should the possessor of so valuable a spot, envy the condition of kings? † Since he may daily walk amidst

* Virgil, with great conciseness, and equal propriety, describes the cucumber,

———Tortusque per herbam
Cresceret in ventrem. Cucumis—

Milton has (if we admit Dr. Bently's alteration, which is, I think, in this place, unquestionably just) almost translated the Latin poet.

———Forth crept
The swelling gourd———

Georg. IV. Par. Lost. B. VII. l. 320.

† Hic rarum tamen in dumis olus, albaque circum
Lilia, verbenasque premens, vescumque papaver,
Regum æquabat opes animis: seraque revertens
Nocte domum, dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis.

Virg. Georg. IV. l. 130.

amidst rows of peaceable and obsequious subjects. Every one of which tenders him some agreeable present, and pays him a willing tribute. Such as is most excellently adapted, both to supply his wants, and to regale his taste: to furnish him, at once with plenty, and with pleasure.

AT a distance, one descries the mighty hills: they heave their huge ridges among the clouds; and look like the barriers of kingdoms, or the boundaries of nature. Bare and deformed as their surface may appear, their bowels are fraught with inward treasures; treasures, lodged fast in the quarries, or sunk deep in the mines. From thence, industry may draw her implements; to plow the soil, to reap the grain, and procure every necessary convenience. From thence, art may fetch her materials; to rear the dome, to swell the organ, and form the noblest ornaments of politer life.

ON another side, the great deep terminates the view. "There go the ships: there is that leviathan;" and there, in that world of waters, an inconceivable number of animals have their habitation. This is the capacious cistern of the universe; that admits, as into a receptacle; and distributes, as from a reservoir; whatever waters the whole globe. There is not a fountain, that gushes in the unfrequented desert; not a rivulet, that flows in the remotest continent; not a cloud that swims in the highest regions of the firmament; but is fed by this all-replenishing source—The ocean is the grand vehicle of trade, and the uniter of distant nations: to us it is peculiarly kind, not only as it wafts into our ports, the harvest of every climate; renders our island the centre of traffick; but also as it secures us from foreign invasions, by a sort of impregnable entrenchment*.

METHINKS,

* Whose rampart was the sea. Nahum iii. 8.

I hope,

against the King of Kings. Consequently, his whole patrimony became confiscated: as well the portion of temporal good things, settled upon the human race during their minority; as that everlasting heritage reserved for their enjoyment, when they should come to full age. But the "seed of the woman," instantly interposing, took off the attainder, and redeemed the alienated inheritance. The first Adam being disinherited, the second Adam * was appointed heir of all things, visible as well as invisible: and we hold our possession of the one; we expect an instatement in the other; purely by virtue of our alliance to him, and our union with him.

3. CHRIST upholds them, which would otherwise tumble into ruin——By him, says the Oracle of Inspiration, all things consist †. His finger rolls the
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We learn from hence, in what a peculiar and endearing light, the Christian is to contemplate the things that are seen. Heathens might discover an eternal power, and infinite wisdom, in the structure of the universe: Heathens might acknowledge a most stupendous liberality, in the unreserved grant of the whole fabric, with all its furniture, to the service of man. But the Christian should ever keep in mind his forfeiture of them, and the price paid to redeem them. He should receive the gifts of indulgent providence, as the Israelites received the law, from the hand of a Mediator; or rather, to him they should come, not only issuing from the fountains of an unbounded bounty, but swimming (as it were) in that crimson tide, which streamed from Immanuel's veins.

† Col. i. 17. I beg leave to subjoin St. Chrysostom's pertinent and beautiful note, upon the passage; by which it will appear, that the sentiment of these sections, is not merely a private opinion, but the avowed belief of the primitive church. Ἰστέτιν, says the eloquent father, εἰς αὐτὸν κρέμαται ἡ πάντων ὑποστάσις; ὁ μόνον αὐτὸς αὐτὰ ἐκ τῆς μητρὸς εἰς τὸ εἶναι παρήγαγεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς αὐτὰ συγκρατεῖ νυν' ὥστε ἂν ἀποσπασθῇ τῇ αὐτῆς περιουσίᾳ, ἀπολαλεῖ καὶ διφθαρείται.

the seasons round, and presides over all the celestial revolutions. His finger winds up the wheels, and impels every spring, of vegetative nature. In a word, the whole weight of the creation, rests upon his mighty arm; and receives the whole harmony of its motion, from his unerring eye.—This habitable globe, with all its rich appendages, and fine machinery, could no more continue, than they could create themselves. Start they would into instant confusion; or drop into their primitive nothing; did not his power support, and his wisdom regulate them every moment. In conformity to his will, they subsist steadfast and invariable in their orders; and wait only for his sovereign nod, “to fall away like water, that runneth apace.”

4. CHRIST * actuates them, which would otherwise be lifeless and insignificant.—Pensioners they are, constant pensioners, on his bounty, and borrow their all from his fulness. He only has Life; and whatever operates, operates by an emanation from his all-sufficiency. Does the grape refresh you, with its enlivening juices? It is by a warrant received, and virtue derived, from the Redeemer? Does bread strengthen your heart, and prove the staff of your life? Remember, that it is by the Saviour's appointment, and through the efficacy of his operation. You are charmed with his melody, when the “Time of singing of birds is come, and “the voice of the nightingale is heard in your “land.” You taste his goodness in the luscious

* John v. 17. My father worketh hitherto, and I work; i. e. I exert that unremitting and unwearied energy, which is the life of the creation.—Thus the words are paraphrased by a masterly expositor, who has illustrated the life of our blessed LORD, in the most elegant taste of criticism: with the most amiable spirit of devotion; and without any mixture of the malignant leaven, or low singularities, of a party. See the Family Expofitor, Vol. I. Sect. 47.

METHINKS, the view of this profuse munificence inspires a secret delight, and kindles a disinterested good will—While the “little hills clap their hands,” and the luxuriant “valleys laugh and sing;” who can forbear catching the general joy? Who is not touched, with lively sensations of pleasure?—While the everlasting Father is scattering blessings through his whole family, and crowning the year with his goodness; who does not feel his breast overflowing, with a diffusive benevolence?—My heart, I must confess, beats high with satisfaction; and breathes out congratulatory wishes, upon all the tenants of these rural abodes: “Peace be within your walls, as well as plenty around your dwellings.” Live, ye highly favoured; live sensible of your benefits, and thankful to your benefactor. Look round upon these prodigiously large incomes of the fruitful soil, and call them (for you have free leave) all your own.—Only let me remind you, of one very important truth. Let me suggest, and may you never forget; that you are obliged to CHRIST JESUS, for every one of these accommodations, which spring from the teeming earth, and smiling skies: For,

I. CHRIST

I hope, this little excursion into the country, will not be looked upon as a departure from my subject; because a rural view, though no essential part of a garden, is yet necessary to complete its beauty.—As usefulness is the most valuable property, that can attend any production; this is the circumstance, chiefly touched upon in the survey of the landscape. Though every piece of this extensive and diversified scene is cast in the most elegant mould; yet nothing is calculated merely for shew, and parade. You see nothing formed in the taste of the ostentatious obelisk, or insignificant pomp of the pyramid. No such idle expences were admitted into that consummate plan, which regulated the structure of the universe. All the decorations of nature are no less advantageous, than ornamental; such as speak the Maker infinitely beneficent, as well as incomparably magnificent.

1. CHRIST * made them, when they were not. —He fetched them up from utter darkness; and gave them both their being, and their beauty. He created the materials of which they are composed; and moulded them into this endless multiplicity, of amiable forms, and useful substances. He arrayed the heavens with a vesture of the mildest blue; and cloathed the earth in a livery of the gayest green: his pencil streaked, and his breath perfumed, whatever is beautiful and fragrant in the universe. His strength set fast the mountains; his goodness garnished the vales; and the same touch, that healed the Leper, wrought the whole visible system into this complete perfection.

2. CHRIST recovered them, when they were forfeited. By Adam's sin, we lost our right to the comforts of life, and fruits of the ground: His disobedience was the most impious and horrid treason, against

* When I ascribe the work of creation to the SON, I am far, very far from offering to exclude the eternal FATHER, and everlasting SPIRIT, from the same honour. The acts of these inconceivable glorious persons are, like their essence, undivided and one. But I chuse to state the important point in this manner, because this is the manifest doctrine of the New Testament; the express belief of our church; and a most noble peculiarity of the Gospel Revelation.—I chuse it also, because I would take every opportunity of inculcating, and celebrating, the divinity of the REDEEMER; a truth, that imparts an unutterable dignity to Christianity: a truth, which lays a most immoveable foundation, for all the comfortable hopes of a Christian: a truth, which will render the mystery of our redemption, the wonder and delight of eternity; and with this truth, every one will observe my assertion is inseparably connected.

If any one questions, whether this be the doctrine of our church; let the Creed, which we repeat in our most solemn devotions, determine his doubt: "I believe," says that form of sound words, "in one LORD JESUS CHRIST, very GOD of very GOD, by whom all things were made—." If it be farther inquired, from whence the Nicene fathers derived this article of their faith? I answer, from the writings of the beloved disciple, who lay on the Saviour's bosom; and of that great apostle, who was caught up into the third heaven. John i. 3. Coloss. i. 16.

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We learn from hence, in what a peculiar and endearing light, the Christian is to contemplate the things that are seen. Heathens might discover an eternal power, and infinite wisdom, in the structure of the universe: Heathens might acknowledge a most stupendous liberality, in the unreserved grant of the whole fabric, with all its furniture, to the service of man. But the Christian should ever keep in mind his forfeiture of them, and the price paid to redeem them. He should receive the gifts of indulgent providence, as the Israelites received the law, from the hand of a Mediator; or rather, to him they should come, not only issuing from the stores of an unbounded bounty, but swimming (as it were) in that crimson tide, which streamed from Immanuel's veins.

† Col. i. 17. I beg leave to subjoin St. Chrysostom's pertinent and beautiful note, upon the passage; by which it will appear, that the sentiment of these sections, is not merely a private opinion, but the avowed belief of the primitive church. Ἰδτε, τιν, says the eloquent father, εἰς αὐτὸν κρεμαται ἡ παντῶν υποστάσις; ὁ μόνον αὐτός αὐτὰ ἐκ τῆς μητρὸς εἰς τὸ εἶναι παρηγάγεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτός αὐτὰ συγκρατεῖ νυν' ὥστε ἂν ἀποσπασθῇ τῆς αὐτῆς περιουσίας, ἀπολαλεῖ καὶ διεφθαρείται.

the seasons round, and presides over all the celestial revolutions. His finger winds up the wheels, and impels every spring, of vegetative nature. In a word, the whole weight of the creation, rests upon his mighty arm; and receives the whole harmony of its motion, from his unerring eye.—This habitable globe, with all its rich appendages, and fine machinery, could no more continue, than they could create themselves. Start they would into instant confusion; or drop into their primitive nothing; did not his power support, and his wisdom regulate them every moment. In conformity to his will, they subsist steadfast and invariable in their orders; and wait only for his sovereign nod, “to fall away like water, that runneth apace.”

4. CHRIST * actuates them, which would otherwise be lifeless and insignificant.—Pensioners they are, constant pensioners, on his bounty, and borrow their all from his fulness. He only has Life; and whatever operates, operates by an emanation from his all-sufficiency. Does the grape refresh you, with its enlivening juices? It is by a warrant received, and virtue derived, from the Redeemer? Does bread strengthen your heart, and prove the staff of your life? Remember, that it is by the Saviour's appointment, and through the efficacy of his operation. You are charmed with his melody, when the “Time of singing of birds is come, and “the voice of the nightingale is heard in your “land.” You taste his goodness in the luscious

* John v. 17. My father worketh hitherto, and I work; i. e. I exert that unremitting and unwearied energy, which is the life of the creation.—Thus the words are paraphrased by a masterly expositor, who has illustrated the life of our blessed LORD, in the most elegant taste of criticism: with the most amiable spirit of devotion; and without any mixture of the malignant leaven, or low singularities, of a party. See the Family Expositor, Vol. I. Sect. 47.

fig, the melting peach, and the musky flavour of the apricot. You smell his sweetness in the opening honeysuckle, and every odoriferous shrub. Could these creatures speak for themselves, they would, doubtless, disclaim all sufficiency of their own, and ascribe the whole honour to their Maker. —“ We are servants,” would they say, of Him, “ who died for you. Cisterns only, dry cisterns “ in ourselves, we transmit to mortals no more, “ than the uncreated fountain transfuses into us. “ Think not, that, from any ability of our own, “ we furnish you with assistance, or administer to “ your comfort. ’Tis the divine energy, the di- “ vine energy alone, that works in us, and does “ you good.—We serve you, O ye sons of men, “ that you may love him who placed us in these sta- “ tions. O! love the LORD, therefore, all ye “ who are supported by our ministry; or else we “ shall * groan with indignation, and regret, at “ your abuse of our services.—Use us, and welcome; “ for we are yours, if ye are CHRIST’S. Crop our “ choicest beauties; rifle all our treasures; accom- “ modate yourselves with our most valuable qua- “ lities; only let us be incentives to gratitude, and “ motives to obedience.”

HAVING gazed the spacious sky; and sent a glance round the inferior creation; ’tis time to descend from this eminence, and confine my attention to the beautiful spot below——Here nature, always pleasing, every where lovely, appears with peculiar attractions. Yonder, she seems dressed in her dishabille; grand, but irregular. Here, she calls in her handmaid art; and shines in all the delicate ornaments, that the nicest cultivation can convey. Those, are her common apartments, where she lodges her ordinary guests; this, is her cabinet of curiosities, where she entertains her in-

imate

* Rom. viii. 22.

imate acquaintance.—My eye shall often expatiate, over those scenes of universal fertility: my feet shall sometimes brush thro' the thicket, or traverse the lawn, or stroll along the forest glade: but to this delightful retreat, shall be my chief resort. Thither, will I make excursions; but here, will I dwell.

If, from my low procedure, I may form an allusion to the most exalted practices; I would observe, upon this occasion, that the celebrated Erasmus, and our judicious Locke, having trod the circle of the sciences, and ranged thro' the whole extent of human literature, at length betook themselves solely to the Bible. Leaving the sages of antiquity, they sat incessantly at the feet of JESUS. Wisely they withdrew, from that immense multiplicity of learning; from those endless tracts of amusing erudition; where, noxious weeds are mixed with wholesome herbs: where is, generally, a much larger growth of prickly shrubs, than of fruitful boughs. They spent their most mature hours, in those hallowed gardens, which God's own wisdom planted; which God's own Spirit watereth; and in which God's own Son is continually walking; where, he meeteth those that seek him; and revealeth to them the glories of his person, and the riches of his goodness.

Thus would I finish the remainder of my days! having had a taste of the politer studies; I would devote my future application, to the lively oracles. From other pursuits, one may glean some fragments of specious instruction: from this, I trust to reap a harvest of the sublimest truths; the noblest improvements; and the purest joys*. Waft me then, O! waft my mind, to Sion's consecrated bowers. Let my thoughts perpetually rove thro'

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the

* Quicquid docetur, veritas; quicquid præcipitur, bonitas; quicquid promittitur, Felicitas.

the awfully-pleasing walks of inspiration. Here, grow those heaven-born plants, the trees of Life and Knowledge; whose ambrosial fruits we now may "take, and eat, and live for ever." Here flow those precious streams of grace and righteousness; whose living waters "whosoever drinks, shall "thirst no more." And, what can the fables of Grecian song, or the finest pages of Roman eloquence—what can they exhibit, in any degree comparable to these matchless prerogatives of revelation?—Therefore, though I should not dislike to pay a visit now-and-then to my heathen masters; I would live with the prophets and apostles. With the one I would carry on some occasional correspondence: but the others should be my bosom friends; my inseparable companions; "my delight, and my "counsellors."

WHAT sweets are these, that so agreeably salute my nostrils? they are the breath of the flowers; the incense of the garden.—How liberally does the jessamine dispense her odoriferous riches! how deliciously has the woodbine embalmed this morning-walk? The air is all perfume.—And is not this, another most engaging argument, to forsake the bed of sloth? Who would lie dissolved in senseless slumbers: while so many breathing sweets, invite him to a feast of fragrancy? Especially considering, that the advancing day will exhale the volatile dainties. A fugitive treat they are, prepared only for the wakeful and industrious: whereas, when the sluggard lifts his heavy eyes, the flowers will droop; their fine scents be dissipated; and instead, of this refreshing humidity, the air will become a kind of liquid fire.

WITH this very motive, heightened by a representation of the most charming pieces of morning scenery, the parent of mankind awakes his lovely consort. There is such a delicacy in the choice, and so much life in the description, of these rural images;

images; that I cannot excuse myself, without repeating the whole passage.—Whisper it, some friendly genius, in the ear of every one, that is now sunk in sleep, and lost to all these noble gratifications!

Awake: The morning shines, and the fresh field
Calls you: You lose the prime, to mark how spring
The tended plants, how blows the citron grove;
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed;
How nature paints her colours; how the bee
Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid sweets.*

How delightful is this fragrance! It is distributed in the nicest proportion; neither so strong, as to oppress the organs; nor so faint, as to elude them.—We often sit cloyed and sated at a sumptuous banquet; but this pleasure never loses its poignancy, never palls the appetite.—Here, luxury itself is innocent and refined; or, rather, in this case, indulgence is incapable of excess.—This balmy entertainment, not only regales the sense, but † cheers the very soul; and instead of clogging, elates its powers.—It puts me in mind of that ever-memorable sacrifice, which was once made in behalf of offending mortals. I mean the sacrifice of the blessed JESUS; when he offered up himself to God, “for a sweet smelling savour.” For such the holy Spirit files that wonderful oblation: As if no image, in the whole sensible creation, was so proper to give us an idea of the ineffable satisfaction which the Father of mercies conceived, from that unparalleled atonement; as the pleasing sensations, which such rich perfumes are capable of raising. “Thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil,” from an apostate world; the most submissive acknowledgments, added to the most costly offerings, from men of defiled hands, and unclean lips; what could they have effected? A prophet introduces the “High and lofty One, that inhabiteth
“biteth

* Milt. Par. lost. B. V. l. 10.

† Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, Prov. xxvii.

“biteth eternity,” turning Himself away from such filthy rags; turning Himself away with a disdainful abhorrence*, as from the noisome steams of a dunghill.—But in CHRIST’s immaculate holiness; in CHRIST’s consummate obedience; in CHRIST’s most precious blood-shedding; O! with what unimaginable complacency, does justice rest satisfied, and vengeance acquiesce!——All thy works, O Thou surety for ruined sinners! all thy sufferings, O thou slaughtered Lamb of God! as well as all thy garments, O thou Bridegroom of thy church! † smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia! They are infinitely more grateful to the eternal Godhead, than the choicest exhalations of the garden, than all the odours of the spicy east, can be to the human nostrils.

As the altar of the old sanctified the gift; so this is the great Propitiation, which recommends the obnoxious persons, and unprofitable services of the believing world. In this, may my soul be interested! By this, may it be reconciled to the Father! There is such a leprous depravity cleaving to my nature, as pollutes whatever I perform. My most profound adorations, and sincerest acts of religion, must not presume to challenge a reward, but humbly implore forgiveness ‡; renouncing, therefore, myself in every instance of duty; disclaiming all shadow

* Amos v. 21, 22.

† Psalm. xiv. 9.

‡ A writer of distinguished superiority thus addresses the great Observer of actions, and Searcher of hearts; and vindicates my sentiments, while he so justly and beautifully utters his own;

Look down, great GOD, with pity’s softest eye,
On a poor breathing particle in Dust.
His crimes forgive, forgive his virtues too,
Those smaller faults, half converts to the right.

Night Thoughts, No. IX.



shadow of confidence * in any deeds of my own; may I now, and evermore, be accepted through the beloved!

WHAT colours, what charming colours, are here! These, so nobly bold; and those, so delicately languid. What a glow is enkindled in some! What a gloss shines upon others! In one, methinks, I see the ruby, with her bleeding radiance; in another, the sapphire, with her sky-tinctured blue; in all such an exquisite richness of dyes, as no other set of paintings in the universe can boast. †—With what a masterly skill, is every one of the varying tints disposed! Here, they seem to be thrown on with an easy dash, of security and freedom; there, they are adjusted by the nicest touches, of art and accuracy. Those, which form the ground, are always so judiciously chosen, as to heighten the lustre of the superadded figures; while the verdure of the impalement, or the shadings of the

* See page 44, and 45, in the second edition of a most candid and evangelical little treatise, called CHRISTIANITY the great ORNAMENT of human life; printed for J. and J. Bonwicke, in St. Paul's church-yard.——“ If christians
“ happily avoid the dangerous extreme, and too often fatal
“ rock, of a dead fruitless faith on the one hand, he [i. e.
“ Satan] will endeavour, by all kind of plausible insinuations,
“ to split them on the opposite, viz. spiritual pride, ostentation, and dependance on their works, as if THESE were
“ the meritorious, or procuring cause of all true peace, hope,
“ consolation, and divine acceptance—Now this self-dependance may be ranked among the most dangerous of the infernal politics, because the fatal poison lies deep, and too often undiscerned.”

† ————— Who can paint
Like nature? Can imagination boast,
Amid his gay creation, hues like these?
And can he mix them with that matchless skill,
And lay them on so delicately fine,
And lose them in each other, as appears
In ev'ry bud that blows?—— Thomf. Spring,

the foliage, impart new liveliness to the whole. Indeed; whether they are blended, or arranged; softened, or contrasted; they are manifestly under the conduct of a taste, that never mistakes; a felicity, that never falls short of the very perfection of elegance.—How inimitably fine, is the texture of the web; on which these shining treasures are displayed! What are the labours of the Persian looms, or the boasted commodities of Brussels, compared with these curious manufactures of nature? Compared with these, the most admired chintses would lose their reputation; even superfine cambricks, appear coarse as canvas in their presence.

WHAT a cheering argument, does our Saviour derive from hence, to strengthen our affiance in GOD! He directs us to learn a lesson of heaven-depending faith, from every bird, that wings the air; and from every flower, that blossoms in the field. If providence, with unremitted care, supports those inferior creatures; and arrays these insensible beings, with so much splendor; surely, he will in no wise withhold from his elect children, “bread to eat, and raiment to put on.”—O ye faithful followers of the Lamb, dismiss every low anxiety; relating to the needful sustenance of life. He that feeds the ravens, from an inexhaustible magazine; he that paints the plants, with such surpassing elegance; in short, he that provides so liberally, both for the animal and vegetable parts of his creation; will not, cannot, neglect his own people. Fear not, little flock, ye peculiar objects of almighty love! it is your Father’s good pleasure, to give you a kingdom.* And, if he freely gives you, an everlasting kingdom hereafter; he will certainly allow you, all necessary conveniencies here.

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* Luke xii. 32.

ONE cannot forbear reflecting, in this place, on the too prevailing humour, of being fond and ostentatious of drels *; what an abject and mistaken ambition

* Mr. Addison has a fine remark on a female warrior celebrated by Virgil. He observes, that with all her other great qualities, this little foible mingled itself. Because, as the poet relates, an intemperate fondness, for a rich and splendid suit of armour, betrayed her into ruin. In this circumstance, our critic discovers a moral concealed; this he admires, as a neat, though oblique satire, on the trifling passion. Spect. Vol. I. No. 15.

I would refer it to the judicious reader, whether there is not a beauty of the same kind, but touched with a more masterly hand, in the song of Deborah.——Speaking of Sisera's mother, the sacred eucharistic ode represents her, as anticipating, in her fond fancy, the victory of her son; and indulging the following soliloquy,—‘Have they not sped? Have they not divided the prey? To Sisera a prey of divers colours; a prey of divers colours of needle-work, of divers colours of needle work on both sides; meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?’—She takes no notice of the signal service, he would do his country, by quelling so dangerous an insurrection: never once reflects on the present acclamations, the future advancements, and the eternal praise, which are the usual acknowledgments of an illustrious conqueror's merit. She can conceive nothing greater, than to be clad in an embroidered vesture; and to trail along the ground, a robe of the richest dyes. This is, in her imagination, the most noble spoil, he can win; the most distinguished trophy, he can erect.——It is also observable, how she dwells upon the trivial circumstance; reiterating it again and again. It has so charmed her ignoble heart; so entirely engrossed her little views; that she can think of nothing else; speak of nothing else; and can hardly ever desist from the darling topic.—Is not this a keen, tho' delicately couched, censure, on that poor contemptible, groveling taste; which is enamoured with silken finery, and makes the attributes of a butterfly the idol of its affections?

How peculiarly conspicuous, is the elevated and magnificent spirit of that venerable mother in Israel; when viewed in comparison with the low, the idle turn of this Canaanitish lady!——Such strong and beautiful contrasts are, I think, some of the most striking excellencies of poetic painting: And in no book are they more frequently used, or expressed with greater life, than in the sacred volumes of inspiration.

ambition is this ! How unworthy the dignity of immortal, and the wisdom of rational beings ! especially, since these little productions of the earth have indisputably the pre-eminence, in such outward embellishments.—Go ; cloath thyself with purple, and fine linen ; trick thyself up in all the gay attire, that the shuttle or the needle can furnish : yet know, to the mortification of thy vanity, that the native elegance of a common daisy *, eclipses all this elaborate finery.—Nay, wert thou decked like some illustrious princess, on her coronation day, in all the splendor of royal apparel ; couldst thou equal even Solomon, in the height of his magnificence and glory ; yet, would the meanest among the flowry populace outshine thee ; every discerning eye, would give the preference, to these beauties of the † ground.—Scorn then to borrow thy recommendations, from a neat disposition of threads, and a curious arrangement of colours. Assume a becoming greatness of temper ; let thy endowments be of the immortal kind ; study to be all-glorious within : be cloathed with humility : wear the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. § To say all in a word, put on the Lord Jesus Christ † : let his blood

* Peaceful and lowly in their native soil,
They neither know to spin, nor care to toil ;
Yet with confess'd magnificence deride
Our mean attire, and impotence of pride. Prior.

† Mr. Cowley, with his usual brilliancy of imagination, files them stars of the earth.

§ How beautifully does the prophet describe the furniture, of a renewed and heavenly mind ; under the similitude of a rich and compleat suit of apparel ! ‘ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord ; my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for he hath cloathed me with the garments of salvation ; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.’ Isai. lxi. 10.

† Rom. xiii. 14.

blood be sprinkled upon thy conscience, and it shall be whiter than the virgin snows: Let his righteousness, like a spotless robe, adorn thy inner man; and thou shalt be amiable, even in the most distinguishing eye of God. Let his blessed Spirit dwell in thy heart; and under his sanctifying operations, thou shalt be made partaker of a divine nature.

THESE are real excellencies; truly noble accomplishments these. In this manner be arrayed, be beautified: and thou wilt not find a rival, in the feathers of a peacock, or the foliation of a tulip. These will exalt thee, far above the low pretensions of lace and embroidery. These will prepare thee to stand in the beatific presence, and to take thy seat among the angels of light.

WHAT an enchanting situation is this! One can scarce be melancholy, within the atmosphere of flowers: such lively hues, and delicious odours, not only address themselves agreeably to the senses; but touch, with a surprising delicacy, the sweetest movements of the mind;

———To the heart inspiring
Vernal * delight and joy.

MILT. B. IV.

How

* “ I would have my reader endeavour to MORALIZE
“ this natural pleasure of the soul, and to improve this
“ vernal delight, as Milton calls it, into christian virtue.
“ When we find ourselves inspired with this pleasing instinct,
“ this secret satisfaction and complacency, arising from the
“ beauties of the creation, let us consider, to whom we stand
“ indebted for all these entertainments of sense; and who
“ it is, that thus opens his hand, and fills the world with
“ good——Such an habitual disposition of mind consecrates
“ every field and wood; turns an ordinary walk into a morn-
“ ing and evening sacrifice; and will improve those transient
“ gleams, which naturally brighten up and refresh the soul
“ on such occasions, into an inviolable and perpetual state of
“ bliss and happiness.” Spect. Vol. V. No. 394.

How often have I felt them dissipate the gloom of thought, and transfuse a sudden gaiety thro' the dejected spirit! I cannot wonder, that Kings descend from their thrones, to walk amidst blooming ivory and gold; or retire from the most sumptuous feast, to be recreated with the more refined sweets of the garden: I cannot wonder, that queens forego, for a while, the compliments of a nation, to receive the tribute of the parterre; or withdraw from all the glitter of a court, to be attended with the much more splendid equipage of a bed of flowers.—But, if this be so pleasing; what transporting pleasures must arise, from the fruition of uncreated excellency! O, what unknown delight, to enter into thy immediate presence, most blessed LORD GOD! to see thee †, thou King of heaven, and LORD of glory, no longer “through a glass darkly, but face to face!” To have all thy goodness, all thy greatness, shine before us; and be made glad for ever with the brightest discovery of thy perfections, with the ineffable joy of thy countenance!

THIS we cannot bear, in our present imperfect state. The effulgence of unveiled divinity, would dazzle a mortal sight. Our feeble faculties, would be overwhelmed with such a fulness of super-abundant bliss; and must lie oppressed, under such “an exceeding great, eternal weight of glory.” But, “when this corruptible hath put on incorruption,”
the

† Isaiah represents the felicity of the righteous in the everlasting world, by this elegant and amiable image: Thine eye shall see the king in his beauty.——Milton touches the same subject, with surprising elevation and majesty of thought: They

———walk with GOD,

High in salvation, and the climes of bliss:

Words, which, like the fiery car, almost transport our affections to those glorious mansions.

Isai. xxxiii. 17. Milt. B. XI. v. 797.

the powers of the soul will be all invigorated; and these earthly Tabernacles “ transformed into a “ likeness with CHRIST’s glorious body.” Then, though * “ the moon shall be confounded, and the “ sun ashamed,” when the LORD of hosts is revealed from heaven; yet, shall his faithful people be enabled to see Him as he is †.

HERE then, my wishes, here be fixed: be this your determined and invariable aim: here, give a loose to your whole ardour: cry out, all that is within me, in the language of inspiration, this one thing have I desired of the LORD, which, with incessant earnestness, I will require; that I may dwell in the celestial house of the LORD, all the days of my future life; to behold the fair beauty of the Lord ‡, and to contemplate, with wonder and adoration—with unspeakable and everlasting rapture—all the attributes of the incomprehensible Godhead.

SOLOMON, a most penetrating judge of human nature, knowing how much mankind is charmed, with the fine qualities of flowers; has figured out the blessed JESUS, that “ fairest among ten “ thousand,” by these lovely representatives. He styles Him || the Rose of Sharon, and the Lilly of the vallies §; like the one, full of delights, and communicable graces; like the other, exalted in Majesty, and complete in beauty. In that sacred pastoral, he ranges

* Ifai. xxiv. 23.

† 1 Joha iii. 2.

‡ Psal. xxvii. 4.

|| Cant. ii. 1.

Malus ut arboribus decori est, ut vitibus uvæ,
Utque rosæ campis, ut lilia vallibus alba,
Sic Christus decus omne suis.———

§ By the lily of the vallies, I apprehend, is meant, not the flower which commonly passes under that denomination, and is comparatively mean; but the grand, majestic, garden-lily; growing in a rich irriguous soil, where it flourishes in the most ample manner, and arrives at the highest perfection. The circumstance of the vallies, added by the sacred writer, is significant not of the species, but of the place.———This is,

ranges the creation; borrows its most finished forms; and dips his pencil in its choicest dyes, to present us with a sketch of the amiableness, of his person: His amiableness, who is the light of the world; the glory of his church; the only hope, the sovereign consolation, of sinners; and high, infinitely high, not only above the noblest comparison, but even "above all blessing and praise."—May I also make the same heavenly use, of all sublunary enjoyments! whatever is pleasurable, or charming, below; let it raise my desire to those sublime delights, which are above: which will yield, not partial, but perfect felicity; not transient, but never-ending, satisfaction and joy.—Yes, my soul, let these beauties in miniature, always remind thee of that glorious person; in whom "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Let these little emanations, teach thee to thirst after the eternal fountain: O! may the creatures, be thy constant clue to the Creator! for this is a certain truth, worthy thy most frequent recollection, and attentive consideration; that the whole compass of finite perfection, is only a faint ray*, shot from that immense source; is only a small drop, derived from that inexhaustible ocean; of all good.

WHAT a surprizing variety is observable, among the flowery tribes! How has the bountiful hand of providence, diversified these nicest pieces of his workmanship! added the charms of an endless novelty,

is, by far, the noblest interpretation, and most exactly suitable to the spiritual sense; which intimates, that the blessed JESUS delights to dwell, by the communications of his Spirit, in humble hearts——. ליליום שושנת העמקים liliūm vallis gaudens.

*———Thou sit'st above all heav'ns,

To us invisible, or dimly seen

In these thy lowest works; yet these declare

Thy goodness beyond thought, and pow'r divine.

Milton, Book V.

novelty, to all their other perfections!—because, a constant uniformity would soon render the entertainment tiresome, or, insipid; therefore every species exhibits something entirely new. The fashion spreads not from family to family; but every one has a mode of its own, which is truly original. The most cursory glance, perceives an apparent difference, as well as a peculiar delicacy, in the airs and habits; the attitude and lineaments; of every distinct class.

SOME rear their heads, with a majestic mien; and over-look, like sovereigns or nobles, the whole parterre. Others seem more moderate in their aims, and advance only to the middle stations; a genius turned for heraldry, would term them, the gentry of the border. While others, free from all aspiring views, creep unambitiously on the ground, and look like the commonalty of the kind.—Some are intersected with elegant stripes, or studded with radiant spots. Some affect to be genteelly powdered, or neatly fringed; while others are plain in their aspect, unaffected in their dress, and content to please with a naked simplicity. Some assume the monarch's purple; some look most becoming in the virgin's white; but black, doleful black, has no admittance into the wardrobe of spring. The weeds of mourning would be a manifest indecorum, when nature holds an universal festival. She would, now, inspire none but delightful ideas; and therefore always makes her appearance, in some * amiable suit —Here, stands a warrior, clad with crimson; there, sits a magistrate, robed in scarlet; and yonder, struts a pretty fellow, that seems to have dipped his plumes in the rainbow, and glitters in all the gay colours of that resplendent arch. Some rise into a curious cup, or fall into a set of beautiful bells: some spread themselves in a swelling tuft, or
croud

* ———Nunc formosissimus annus.

Virg.

croud into a delicious cluster.—In some, the predominant stain, softens by the gentlest diminutions; till it has even stole away from itself. The eye is amused at the agreeable delusion; and we wonder, to find ourselves insensibly decoyed, into a quite different lustre. In others, you would think, the fine tinges were emulous of pre-eminence; disdain- ing to mingle, they confront one another, with the resolution of rivals, determined to dispute the prize of beauty; while each is improved, by the opposition, into the highest vivacity of complexion.

How manifold are thy works * O LORD! multiplied even to a prodigy. Yet in wisdom, consummate wisdom, hast thou made them all.—How I admire the vastness of the contrivance, and the exactness of the execution? Poor man, with difficulty, accomplishes a single work: hardly, and after many efforts, does he arrive at a tolerable imitation, of some one production of nature. But, the Almighty Artist spoke millions of substances, into instantaneous being; all wonderfully various, all completely perfect.—Repeated experiments generally discover errors, in our happiest inventions. But, these fine structures have pleased, for almost six thousand years; and no † fault been discovered in the original plan, no room for the least improvement upon the first model.—All our performances, the more minutely they are scanned, the more imperfect they appear. But, with regard to these delicate objects, the more we search into their properties, the more we are ravished with their graces: they are sure to disclose fresh strokes, of the most masterly skill; in proportion to the attention, with which they are examined.

NOR

* Psalm civ. 24.

† Eccles. iii. 14. I know, that whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it.

NOR is the simplicity of the operation less astonishing, than the accuracy of the workmanship, or the infinitude of the effects. Should you ask, "where, and what, are the materials, that beautify the blooming world? What rich tints; what splendid dyes; what stores of shining crayons; stand by the Heavenly Limner, when he paints the robe of nature?" 'Tis answered, His powerful pencil needs no such costly apparatus. A single principle, under His conducting hand, branches out into an immensity of the most varied, and most finished forms. The moisture of the earth, and circumambient air, passed through proper strainers, and disposed in a range of pellucid tubes: this performs all the wonders, and produces all the beauties of vegetation. This creeps along the fibres, the low-spread moss; and climbs to the very tops, of the lofty-waving cedars. This, attracted by the root, circulating through invisible canals, and pervading the substance of the minutest twigs, bursts into gems; expands itself into leaves; and clothes the forest, with all its verdant honours.—This one*, plain and simple, cause, gives birth to all the charms, which deck the youth, the maturity of the year. This blushes, in the early hepatica; and flames, in the late advancing poppy. This reddens into blood, in the veins of the mulberry; and attenuates itself into leafen gold, to create a covering for the quince. This breathes, in all the fragrant gales of our garden; and weeps odorous gum, in the groves of Arabia.—So † wonderful is our Creator in counsel, and so excellent in working!

I

IN

* "When every several effect has a particular separate cause, this gives no pleasure to the spectator, as not discovering contrivance. But that work is beheld with admiration and delight, as the result of deep counsel, which is complicated in its parts, and yet simple in its operations. Where a great variety of effects are seen to arise from one principle operating uniformly." Abernethy on the Attributes.

† Isai. xxviii. 29.

IN a grove of tulips, or a knot of pinks, one perceives a difference in almost every individual. Scarce any two are turned, and tintured, exactly alike: each allows himself a little particularity in his dress, though all belong to one family: so that they are various, and yet the same.——A pretty emblem this, of the smaller differences between protestant christians. There are modes in religion, which admit of variation, without prejudice to sound faith, or real holiness: just as the drapery, on these pictures of the spring, may be formed after a variety of patterns, without blemishing their beauty, or altering their nature.—Be it so then, that, in some points of inconsiderable consequence, several of our brethren dissent: yet, let us all live amicably and sociably together; for we harmonize in principles, though we vary in punctilios. Let us join in conversation, and intermingle interests; discover no estrangements of behaviour, and cherish no alienation of affection: if any strife subsists, let it be to follow our Divine Master most closely in humility of heart, and unblameableness of life; let it be to serve one another most readily, in all the kind offices of a cordial friendship. Thus shall we be united, though distinguished; united in the same grand fundamentals, though distinguished by some small circumstantialia; united in one important bond of brotherly love, though distinguished by some slighter peculiarities of sentiment.

I APPREHEND, that between christians, whose judgments disagree only about a form of prayer, or manner of worship, there is no more essential difference; than between flowers that bloom from the same kind of seed, but happen to be somewhat diversified in the mixtures of their colours:——Whereas, if one denies the divinity of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and degrades the incarnate GOD to the meanness of a mere creature; if another cries up the worthiness of human works, and depreciates

ciates the alone meritorious righteousness of the glorious Mediator; if a third addresses the incommunicable honours to a finite being, and bows to the image, or prays to the saint:—these are errors, in my opinion, unhappily derogatory to the Redeemer's dignity, and not a little prejudicial to the comfort of his people: against these, therefore, to remonstrate, bespeaks not the censorious bigot, but the friend of truth, and the lover of mankind. —Whereas, to stand neuter and silent, while such principles are propagated, might be an instance of criminal remissness, rather than of christian moderation. —For persons who espouse such persuasions, as the former; and habituate themselves to such practices, as the latter; we will not fail to maintain a tender compassion; we will not cease to put up earnest intercessions; we will also acknowledge and love, whatever is truly excellent and amiable in them. Yet, we dare not subscribe their creed; we cannot remit our assiduous, but kind endeavours, to reconcile them to what (on the most impartial examination) we are thoroughly convinced, is a more scriptural belief, and a purer worship †.

ANOTHER remarkable circumstance, recommending the flowery creation, is their regular succession. They make not their appearance all at once, but in an orderly rotation. While a proper number of these obliging retainers are in waiting, the others abscond; but hold themselves in a pos-

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ture

† In some former editions, I expressed myself, on this point, unwarily and harshly. But my meaning, and real sentiments were no other than those represented above.—The reader, from such unguarded intimations, might too naturally be led to conclude, that the author avows, and would stir up, a spirit of persecution. But, this is a method of dealing with opponents in religious doctrines, which he disclaims, as absurd; and abhors, as iniquitous. He is for no force, but that of rational conviction; for no constraint, but that of affectionate persuasion. Thus, if you please, compel them to come in. Luke xiv. 23.

ture of service, ready to take their turn, and fill each his respective station, the instant it becomes vacant.—The Snow-drop, foremost of the lovely train, breaks her way through the frozen soil, in order to present her early compliments to her Lord: dressed in the robe of innocency, she steps forth, fearless of dangers; long before the trees have ventured to unfold their leaves, even while the icicles hang on our houses.—Next, peeps out the Crocus; but cautiously, and with an air of timidity: she hears the howling blasts, and skulks close to her low situation. Afraid she seems, to make large excursions from her root; while so many rufian winds are abroad, and scouring along the æther.—Nor is the Violet last, in the shining embassy of the year; which, with all the accomplishments that would grace a royal garden, condescends to line our hedges, and grow at the feet of briars. Freely, and without any solicitation, it distributes the bounty of its emissive sweets: while itself, with an exemplary humility, retires from sight; seeking rather to administer pleasure, than to win admiration.* Emblem, expressive emblem, of those modest virtues, which delight to bloom in obscurity; and extend a cheering influence to multitudes, who are scarce acquainted with the source of their comforts! Motive, engaging motive, to that ever-active beneficence; which stays not for the importunity of the distressed, but even prevents them with the blessings of its goodness!—The poor Polyanthus, that lately adorned the border with her sparkling beauties; and transplanted into our windows, gave us a fresh entertainment, is now no more. I saw her complexion fade; I perceived her breath decay; till at length she expired and dropt into her grave.—Scarce have we sustained this loss, but in comes the Auricula, and more than retrieves it: arrayed she comes, in a splendid variety of amiable forms; with an eye of crystal, and garments of the most glossy satin;

* Prodesse quam conspici.

faint; exhaling perfume, and powdered with silver. A very distinguished procession this! The favourite care of the florist! Scarce one among them, but is dignified with a character of renown; or has the honour to represent, some celebrated toast.— But these also, notwithstanding their illustrious titles, have exhausted their whole stock of fragrance, and are mingled with the meanest dust — Who could forbear grieving at their departure, did not the Tulips begin to raise themselves on their fine wands, or stately stalks? They flush the parterre with one of the gayest dresses, that blooming nature wears. Did ever beau or belle make so gaudy an appearance, in a birth-night suit? Here, one may behold the innocent wantonness of beauty: here she indulges a thousand freaks, and sports herself in the most charming diversity of colours: yet, I should wrong her, were I to call her a coquet; because, she plays her lovely changes, not to enkindle dissolute affections, but to display her Creator's glory.—Soon arises the Anemone; incircled at the bottom, with a spreading robe; and rounded at the top, into a beautiful dome. In its loosely flowing mantle, you may observe a noble negligence; in its gently bending tufts, the nicest symmetry. I would term it, the fine gentleman of the garden; because it seems to have the peculiar felicity, of reconciling art with ease.—The same month has the merit of producing the Ranunculus. All bold and graceful, it expands the riches of its foliage; and acquires, by degrees, the loveliest enamel in the world. As persons of intrinsic worth, disdain the superficial arts of recommendation, practised by fops; so, this lordly flower scorns to borrow any of its excellence, from powders and essences. It needs no such attractives, to render it the darling of the curious; being sufficiently engaging from the elegance of its figure, the radiant variety of its tinges, and a certain superior dignity of

of aspect.—Methinks nature improves in her operations; her latest strokes are most masterly: to crown the collection, she introduces the Carnation; which captivates every eye, with a noble spread of graces; and charms another sense, with a profusion of exquisite odours. This single flower has, centered in itself, the perfections of all the preceding: the moment it appears, it so commands our attention, that we scarce regret the absence of the rest.—The Gilly-flower, like a real friend, attends you through all the vicissitudes and alterations of the season: while others make a transient visit only. This is rather an inhabitant, than a guest, in your gardens; adds fidelity to complaisance.

BUT 'tis in vain to attempt a catalogue of these amiable gifts: there is an endless multiplicity, in their characters; and an invariable order, in their approaches. Every month brings its ornaments; such as are different from the rest, and peculiar to itself.

HERE, let me stand a while, to contemplate the wise and gracious design, apparent in this distribution of flowers, through the several periods of the year.—Were they all to blossom together; there would be at once a promiscuous throng, and at once a total privation: so that we should scarce have opportunity, of adverting to the beauties of half; and must soon lose the agreeable company of them all. But now, since every species has a separate post to occupy; and a distinct time for appearing; we can take a leisurely and minute survey, of each succeeding set. We can view and review their forms; taste their sweets; enter into a more intimate acquaintance, with their charming qualities; and receive all those pleasing services, which they are commissioned to yield—This remarkable piece of œconomy is productive of another very valuable effect. It not only places, in the most advantageous light, every particular community;
but

but also is the most effectual provision, against the frailty of the whole nation: or, to speak more truly, it renders them a sort of † immortal corps, whose successory attendants never fail. For, though some are continually dropping; yet, by this expedient, others are as continually rising, to beautify our borders, and keep up the entertainment unintermitted.

O! what goodness is this to provide such a series of gratifications for mankind! both to diversify, and perpetuate, the fine collation: to take care, that our paths should be, in a manner, incessantly strewed with flowers.—And what wisdom, to bid every one of these insensible beings, know the precise juncture for their coming forth! insomuch, that no actor on a stage, can be more exact in performing his part; can make a more regular entry, or a more punctual exit.

Who imboldens the Daffodil, to venture abroad in February; and to trust her flowering gold, with inclement and treacherous skies? Who informs the various tribes of Fruit-bearing Blossoms; that vernal suns and a more genial warmth, are fittest for their delicate texture? Who teaches the Clove to stay; till hotter beams are prepared, to infuse a spicy richness into her odours; and tincture her complexion with the deepest crimson?—Who disposes these beautiful troops, into such orderly bodies; retarding some, and accelerating others? Who has instructed them to file off, with such perfect regularity; as soon as the duty of their respective stations is over? And, when one detachment retires, who gives the signal for another immediately

† “ Allusion to the celebrated practice of the Persian kings; who maintained for their life-guard, a body of troops, called Immortal; because it perpetually subsisted: for as soon as any of these men died, another was immediately put into his place.”

diately to advance? Who, but that unerring Providence, which from the highest thrones of angels, to the very lowest degrees of existence, orders all things in "number, weight, and measure!"

THESE, O my soul, are the regulations of that most adorable, most beneficent Being, who in the fulness of time bowed the heavens; came down to dwell on earth; and united the frailty of thy mortal nature, to all the glories of his Godhead. All the honour of this admirable establishment belongs to that ever-blessed Ransomer of sinners; who sustained the vengeance, which thou hast deserved, and was doomed to suffer; who fulfilled the obedience, which thou wast obliged, but unable to perform; and in his most sacred immaculate humanity, humbled himself, (O never enough to be admired loving-kindness!) humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross.—He formed this vast machine, and adjusted its nice dependancies. The pillars, that supported it; the embellishments that adorn it; and the laws that govern it; are the result of his unfathomable counsels. O! the heights of his majesty, and the depths of his abasement!

WHICH shall we admire most, his essential greatness, or his free grace? He created the exalted seraph, that sings in glory; and every the minutest insect, that flutters in air, or crawls in dust. He marks out a path, for all those globes of light, which travel the circuit of the skies, and disdains not to rear the Violet from its lowly bed, or to plait the Daisy that dresses our plains. So grand are his operations; yet so condescending his regards! If Summer, like a sparkling bride, is all glorious in her apparel; what is this, but a feeble reflection of his uncreated effulgence? If Autumn, like a munificent host, exhibits all things richly to enjoy; what is this, but a little taste of his inexhaustible liberality? If thunders roar, you hear
the

the sound of his trumpet: if lightnings glare, you see the launching of his glittering spear: If the “ perpetual hills be scattered, and the everlasting mountains bowed,” you behold a display—— No, says the Prophet, you have rather * the hiding of his power. So immense is his power; so uncontrollable and inconceivable; that all these mighty works are but a sketch, in which more is concealed than discovered.

Thus, I think, we should always view the visible system; with an evangelical telescope (if I may be allowed the expression,) and with an evangelical

* Heb. iii. 4. Nothing can be more magnificently conceived, than the imagery of this whole chapter; and upon the foot of our interpretation, nothing was ever more delicately and nobly turned, than the sentiment of this clause. Other senses of the passage, I acknowledge, may be assigned with equal propriety. But none, I think, can be imagined so majestic and sublime. As this original will fairly admit of it; as it carries no disagreement with the context; and expresses a most important, as well as undoubted truth; I hope, I may be permitted to use it at least by way of accommodation. Especially, as it suggests one of the finest mottos imaginable; wherewith to inscribe all the visible productions, of the Creator's hand. When struck with astonishment, we consider their grandeur, beauty, and consummate perfections; let us, in injustice to their author, apply the exalted reflection of this sacred ode: “ In all these is the hiding, rather than an adequate display, of his matchless power: Tho' they challenge our praise, and surpass our comprehension; yet are they by no means the utmost exertions, but rather some flighter essays, of Omnipotent skill.”—Milton, relating the overthrow of the fallen angels, reminds his reader of a noble circumstance, much of this nature. Messiah, unaided and alone, had utterly routed an innumerable host of apostate spirits. But, to create a juster idea of this illustrious conqueror, the poet beautifully adds,

“ Yet half his strength he put not forth.”

If we forget to make the same remark, when we contemplate God in his works; we must necessarily form very scanty conceptions of that SUPREME BEING, before whom all nations are as a “ Drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance.”

gelical microscope: regarding Christ Jesus as the great projector and architect; that planned, and executed, the amazing scheme. Whatever is magnificent or valuable; tremendous or amiable; should ever be ascribed to the Redeemer. This is the Christians Natural Philosophy: and with regard to this method, of considering the things that are seen; we have an inspired apostle, for our preceptor and precedent. Speaking of Christ, he says, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands."——Did we carefully attend to this leading principle, in all our examinations of nature; it would, doubtless, be a most powerful means of enkindling our love, and * strengthening

* The Apostles, I observe, delight to use this method of displaying the Honours of the Redeemer, and establishing the faith of his people.—The beloved disciple, teaching that most precious doctrine, "of a Lamb slain to take away the sins of the world;" in order to evince the sufficiency of CHRIST's sacrifice for this blessed purpose, affirms that "all things were made by him: and without him was not any thing," no, not so much as one single being, "made," John i. 3.—St. Paul preaching the same glad tidings to the Colossians, and expressly maintaining, That we have redemption through his blood; seems to foresee an objection of this kind: "to expiate transgressions against an infinite Majesty, is a most prodigious act; it must cost vastly more than any common surety can pay, to redeem a sinful world. What reason have we to believe, that Jesus is equal to this mighty undertaking?" All possible reason, replies the apostle, from the dignity of his person: For he is the image of the invisible God; and from the greatness of his works, "for by him all things were made." Consider the operations of his hands, and you cannot doubt the atoning efficacy of his death, Col. i. 15, 16.—The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews falls exactly into the same train of arguing; declaring, that CHRIST Jesus has purged our sins, by the sacrifice of himself: he proves his ample ability for this tremendous office from his essential excellence, because he is the brightness of his Father's glory; and from his admirable works, because "he made the worlds,

strengthening our faith: for, when I look round upon millions of noble substances, and carry with me this transporting reflection, "The Maker of them all died on a cross for me;" how can I remain any longer indifferent? Must not the coldest heart begin to glow with gratitude?—When I survey an immensity of the finest productions imaginable; and remember, that the author of them all is "my Righteousness, my Redemption;" how can I choose but repose the most chearful confidence, in such a Mediator.

LET me add one more remark, upon the admirable adjustment of every particular, relating to these fine colonies planted in the parterre.—With such surprising correctness, is their structure finished; that any the least conceivable alteration would very much impair their perfection. Should you see, for instance, the nice disposition of the Tulip's attire fly abroad, disorderly and irregular, like the flaunting Woodbine: should the Jessamin rear her diminutive head, on those grand columns which support the Holly-hock: should the erect and manly aspect of the Piony hang down with a pensive air, like the flexile bells of the Hyacinth: should that noble plainness, which distinguishes the Lily, be exchanged for the fringes, which edge the Pink; or the gaudy stains, which bedrop the Iris: should those tapering pillars, which arise in the middle of its vase, and, tipt with golden pendants, give such a lustre to the surrounding pannels of alabaster.—Should these sink and disappear, like the Chives which cover the heart of the Anemone:—In many
of

worlds, and upholdeth all things by the word of his power," Heb. i. 2, 3.—Which thought, as it is so important in itself; of such signal comfort to Christians; and so particularly insisted on, by the inspired writers; I hope I shall need no apology for an attempt to illustrate and enforce it, in a kind of evangelical Descant upon Creation, annexed to these reflections.

of these cases, would not the transposition be fantastical and awkward? In all, to the apparent prejudice of every individual?

AGAIN; with regard to the time of their appearing; this circumstance is settled, by a remarkable foresight and precaution. What would become of the sailor; if, in very stormy weather, he should raise a lofty mast, and crowd it with all his canvas! Such would be the ill effect; if the most stately species of flowers should presume to come abroad, in the blustering months. Therefore, those only that shoot the shortest stems, and display the smallest spread of leaves, or, (if you please) carry the least sail, are launched amidst the blowing seasons.—How injudiciously would the perfumer act; if he should unseal his finest essences, and expose them to the northern winds, or wintry rains! Our blooming artists of the aromatic profession, at least the most delicate among them, seem perfectly aware of the consequences of such a procedure. Accordingly, they postpone the opening of their odoriferous treasures; till a serener air, and more * unclouded

* Casimire, in a very poetical manner, addresses himself to the dormant Rose; and most prettily invites her to venture abroad, by the mention of these two circumstances.

*Siderum sacros imitata vultus,
Quid lates dudum, Rosa? Delicatum
Effer e terris caput, O tepentis
Filia cæli.*

*Jam tibi nubes fugiunt aquosæ,
Quos figant albis Zephyri quadrigis;
Jam tibi mulcet Boream jocantis
Aura Favoni.*

Child of the Summer, charming Rose,
No longer in confinement lie:
Arise to light, thy form disclose;
Rival the spangles of the sky.

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clouded skies, grant a protection to their amiable traffic: till they are under no more apprehensions, of having them dissipated by the rude blasts, or drowned in incessant showers.

WHAT a striking argument is here for resignation; unfeigned resignation, to all the disposals of Providence! Too often are our dissatisfied thoughts apt to find fault with divine dispensations: we tacitly arraign our Maker's conduct, or question his kindness with regard to ourselves: we fancy our lot, not so commodiously situate; or our condition, not so happily circumstanced; as if we had been placed in some other station of life.—But let us behold this exquisitely nice regulation of the minutest plants; and be ashamed of our repining folly. Could any fibre in their composition be altered; or one line in their features be transposed; without clouding some of their beauties? Could any fold in their vestments be varied; or any link in their orderly succession be broken down; without injuring some delicate property? And does not that all-seeing eye, which preserves so exact a harmony, among these pretty toys; maintain as watchful a care, over his rational creatures?—Does he choose the properest season, for the Cowslip to arise, and drink the dews? And can he neglect the concerns, or misjudge the conveniences, of his sons, and daughters? He, who has so completely disposed, whatever pertains to the vegetable œconomy; that the least diminution, or addition,

The rains are gone, the storms are o'er;
 Winter retires to make thee way:
 Come then, thou sweetly-blushing flow'r;
 Come, lovely stranger, come away.

The sun is dress'd in beaming smiles,
 To give thy beauties to the day;
 Young Zephyrs wait, with gentlest gales,
 To fan thy bosom, as they play.

dition, would certainly hurt the finished scheme; does without all peradventure, preside, with equal attention, over the interest of his own people.

BE still, then, thou uneasy mortal *, know that GOD is unerringly wise; and be assured, that, amidst the greatest multiplicity of Beings, he does not overlook thee. Thy Saviour has given me authority to assert, That thou art of far superior value, in the estimate of omnipotence, than all the herbage of the field—If his sacred will ordains sickness for thy portion; never dare to imagine, that uninterrupted health would be more advantageous. If he pleases to withhold or take away, children; never presume to conclude, that thy happiness is blasted, because thy hopes of an increasing family are disappointed. He, that marshals all the starry host, and so accurately arranges every the meanest species of herbs; HE orders all the peculiarities, all the changes of thy state, with a vigilance, that nothing conclude; with a goodness

* *Permittas ipsis expendere numinibus, quid
Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris.
Nam pro jocundis aptissima quæque dabunt Dii:
Carior est illis homo, quam sibi.*

JUVEN.

Since all the downward tracts of time
God's watchful eye surveys;
O! who so wise to choose our lot,
And regulate our ways?

Since none can doubt his equal love,
Unmeasurably kind;
To his unerring, gracious will,
Be ev'ry wish resign'd.

Good when he gives, supremely good;
Nor less, when he denies;
Ev'n crosses, from his sov'reign hand,
Are blessings in disguise.

ness that endureth for ever.—Bow thy head, therefore, in humble acquiescence: rest satisfied, That *whatever is*, by the appointment of heaven*, *is right*, is best.

AMONG all the productions of the third creating-day, this of flowers seems to be peculiarly designed for man: a present, calculated in an especial manner, for his use, and delight. Man has, as it were, the monopoly of this favour; and scarce shares the satisfaction, resulting from it, with any other animal. I don't find, that other creatures are smit with their beauties, or regaled with their odours. The horse never stands still, to gaze upon their charms; nor does the ox turn aside, to browse upon their sweets. Senses they have, to discern these curious objects in the gross; but no taste, to distinguish their fine accomplishments.—Just so, carnal and unenlightned men may understand the literal meaning of scripture; may comprehend the evidences

* If Mr. Pope understands the maxim in this limited sense, he speaks a most undeniable and glorious truth. But, if that great poet includes whatever comes to pass, through the wild and extravagant passions of men; surely no thinking person, at least no Christian, can accede to his opinion.—What God orders, is wise, beyond all possibility of correction; and good, above all that we can ask or think. His decrees are the result of infinite discernment; and all his dispensations, the issues of unbounded benevolence.—But man, fallen man, is hurried away by his lusts, into a thousand irregularities; which are deplorably evil in themselves, and attended with consequences, manifestly pernicious to society.—Let the sentiment, therefore, be restrained to the disposal of heaven, and I most readily subscribe it. But if it be extended to the conduct of men, and the effects of their folly: I think myself obliged to enter my protest against it. For, whatever kindles the divine indignation—is cause of final ruin to the author—is strictly forbidden by God's holy word—is contrary to the whole design of his revealed will, and the very reverse of his essential attributes—This cannot possibly be right. This is most undoubtedly wrong. Omnipotence, indeed, can overrule it, and educe good from it: But, the very notion of overruling supposes it to be absolutely wrong in itself.

evidences of its divine inspiration; and yet have no relish of the heavenly truths, it teaches; no ardent longing for the spiritual blessings, it offers; see "no form of comeliness" in the Saviour, it describes, so as to render him the supreme desire of their souls.

THE chief end of these beautiful appearances, philosophers say, is to enfold and cherish the embryo seed; or to swathe the tender body, during its infant state.—But, whatever is the chief end of nature; 'tis certain, she never departs from the design, of administering delight to mankind *. This is inseparably connected, with her other views.—Were it only to secure a reproductive principle, what need of such elegant complications? Why so much art employed, and so many decorations added? Why should vestments be prepared, richer than brocades; more delicate than lawns; and of a finer glow than the most admired velvets?—If the great mother had no other aim, than barely to accommodate her little offspring; warm flannel, or homely fustian, would have served her turn: served it, full as well as the most sumptuous tissues, or all the furniture of the mercer's shop.

It seems plain then, that flowers were endued with such enchanting graces, for the pleasure of man; and in pursuance of this original intention, they still pay their court to the human race. Accordingly, the finest of each species croud about our habitation: and are rarely to be seen, at a distance from our abodes. They thrive, under our cultivating

* "We find that the most important parts in the vegetable world are those which are the most beautiful. These are the seeds by which the several races of plants are propagated and continued, and which are always lodged in flowers or blossoms. Nature seems to hide her principal design, and to be industrious in making the earth gay and delightful, while she is carrying on her great work, and intent upon her own preservation." Spect. Vol. V. No. 387.

cultivating hand, and observing eye; but degenerate, and pine away, if unregarded by their Lord. —To win his attention, and deck his retreats, they hide their deformities under ground; and display nothing but the most graceful forms, and engaging colours, to his sight. To merit a farther degree of his esteem, the generality of them dispense a delightful perfume. And, what is still more obliging, reserve * their richest exhalations, to embalm his morning and evening walks †: because, he usually chooses those cool hours, to recreate himself among their blooming ranks; therefore, at those hours, they are most lavish of their fragrance, and breathe out their choicest spirits.

O MAN, greatly beloved by thy Creator! The darling of providence! Thou art distinguished by his goodness; distinguished thyself also by thy gratitude. Be it thy one undivided aim, to glorify him who has been at so much expence, to gratify thee! —While all these inferior creatures, in silent eloquence, declare the glory of God, do thou lend them thy tongue. Be thou the high-priest, of the mute creation: let their praises become vocal in thy songs.——Adore the supreme benefactor, for the blessings he showers down, upon every order of beings: adore him for numberless mercies, which are appropriated to thyself: but, above all, adore him, for that noble gift of a rational, and immortal soul.—This constitutes us masters of the globe, and gives us the real enjoyment of its riches.

* ———The flow'rs,
That open now their choicest bosom'd smells,
Reserv'd from night, and kept for thee in store.

MILT.

† The twining Jasmine, and the blushing Rose,
With lavish grace their Morning scents disclose;
The smelling 'Tub'rose and Jonquil declare
The stronger impulse of an Ev'ning air.

PRIOR'S SOL.

This discovers ten thousand beauties, which otherwise had been lost; and renders them both a source of delights, and a nursery of devotion.——By virtue of this exalted principle, we are qualified to admire our Maker's works, and capable of bearing his illustrious image: bearing his illustrious image, not only when these ornaments of the ground have resigned their honours; but, when the great origin of day is extinguished in the skies; and all the flaming orbs on high are put out in obscure darkness.——Then to survive; to survive the ruins of one world, and to enjoy GOD—to resemble GOD—to be “filled with all the fulness of GOD,” in another;—what a happiness, what an inestimable happiness is this! yet, this is thy privilege, (barter it not, for trifles of an hour;) this thy glorious prerogative, O man!

O! THE goodness, the exuberant goodness of GOD! I cannot forbear celebrating it once more, before I pass to another consideration.——How much should we think ourselves obliged, to a generous friend; that should build a stately edifice*, purely

* I cannot persuade myself, that the comparison is stretched beyond proper bounds, when carried to this pitch. It is my steadfast opinion, that the world, at least this lower world, with its various appurtenances, was intended purely for man; that it is appropriated to him, and that he (in subordination to God's glory) is the end of its creation.—Other animals, 'tis true, partake of the Creator's benefits; but then, they partake under the notion of man's domestics, or on the foot of retainers to him; as creatures, that bear some relation to his service, and some way or other contribute to his good. So that still He is the centre of the whole; or as our incomparable Milton, equally master of poetry and divinity, expresses himself, “All things live for man.” Par. Lost, XI. 161.

Mr. Pope, in his *Ethic Epistles*, is pleased to explode this tenet, as the height of pride, and a gross absurdity.——For my part, I see no reason for such a charge. With all submission to so superior a genius, it seems very remote from pride, to be duly sensible of favours vouchsafed; to con-

template

purely for our abode! But, how greatly would the obligation be increased; if the hand that built, should

template them in all the extent of their munificence, and acknowledge them accordingly. I should rather imagine, that to contract their size, when they are immensely large; to stint their number, when they are altogether innumerable; that such a procedure favours more of insensibility, than our hypothesis of presumption; and has more in it of ingratitude, than that of arrogance.

And how can it be deemed an absurdity, to maintain that God gave us a world, for our possession; when it is our duty to believe, that He gave us his only Son, for our propitiation? Sure, it can be neither difficult, nor extravagant, to suppose, that He designed this habitable globe, with its whole furniture for our present use; since He with-held not his Holy Child Jesus, but freely delivered him up, for our final salvation.

Upon the whole, I cannot but conclude, that the attempt of our famous poet is neither kind, with regard to his fellow-creatures——nor grateful, with regard to his Creator——neither is his scheme, in fact, true. The attempt not kind, with regard to man; because it robs him of one of the most delightful and ravishing contemplations imaginable. To consider the great author of existence as having me in his eye, when He formed universal nature; as contriving all things, with an immediate view, to the exigencies of my particular state; and making them all in such a manner, as might be most conducive to my particular advantage: this must needs occasion the strongest satisfactions, whenever I cast a glance on the objects that surround me.——Not grateful with regard to God; because, it has the most direct tendency to diminish our sense of his kindness, and consequently, to throw a damp upon our gratitude. It teaches us to look upon ourselves, as almost lost among a croud of other beings, or regarded only with an occasional and incidental beneficence; which must certainly weaken the disposition, and indeed slacken the ties, to the most adoring thankfulness.——To which, I apprehend, we may justly add, neither is the scheme, in fact, true. For, not to mention what might be urged from the sure word of revelation, this one argument appears to be sufficiently conclusive. The world began with man; the world must cease with man; consequently, the grand use, the principal end of the world, is to subserve the interests of man. It is on all sides agreed, that the edifice was erected, when man was to be furnished with an habitation; and that it will be demolished, when man has no farther need of its accommodations; when

should also furnish it: and not only furnish, with all that is commodious and comfortable; but ornament it also, with whatever is splendid and delightful! This has our most indulgent Creator done; in a manner infinitely surpassing, all we could wish, or imagine.

The Earth is assigned us for a dwelling.—The Skies are stretched over us, like a magnificent canopy, dyed in the purest azure; and beautified, now with pictures of floating silver, now with colourings of reflected crimson.—The Grass is spread under us, as a spacious carpet; wove with silken threads of green, and damask'd with flowers of every hue.—The Sun, like a golden lamp, is hung out in the ethereal vault! and pours his effulgence, all the day, to lighten our paths.—When night approaches, the Moon takes up the friendly office; and the *Stars* are kindled in twinkling myriads, to cheer the darkness with their milder lustre, not disturb our repose by too intense a glare.—The Clouds, besides the rich paintings they hang around the heavens act the part of a shifting screen; and defend us, by their seasonable interposition, from the scorching beams of Summer: may we not also regard them, as the great watering pots of the globe?

He enters into the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, “the earth, and all the Works that are therein, shall be burnt up.” From which it seems a very obvious and fair deduction, that man is the final cause of this inferior creation.

So that I think my readers and myself, privileged (not to say, on the principles of gratitude, obliged) to use those lovely lines of our author, with a propriety and truth, equal to their elegance and beauty.

For me kind nature wakes her genial pow'r,
Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r!
Annual, for me, the grape, the rose renew
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me, health gushes from a thousand springs.

Eth. Ep. I. ver. 129.

globe? which, wafted on the wings of the winds, difpenfe their moiſture * evenly through the univerfal garden; and fructify, with their ſhowers, whatever our hand plants.—The Fields are our exhauftleſs granary.—The Ocean is our vaſt reſervoir. The Animals ſpend their ſtrength, to diſpatch our buſineſs; reſign their cloathing, to replenish our ward-robe; and ſurrender their very lives, to provide for our tables.—In ſhort, every Element is a ſtore-houſe of conveniences; every Season brings us the choiceſt productions; all Nature is our caterer.—And, what is a moſt endearing recommendation of theſe favours, they are all as lovely as they are uſeful. You obſerve nothing mean or inelegant. All is clad in Beauty's faireſt robe †, and regulated by Proportion's nicest rule.

The

* This circumſtance, amidſt abundance of other noble and delicate remarks upon the wonders of nature, is finely touched in the Philoſophical Tranſactions recorded in the book of Job, chap. xxxviii. ver. 25.—מיפת לחשם חזלת "Who hath divided a water-courſe for the overflowing of waters?"—The Hebrew is ſo pregnant and rich with ſenſe, that no tranſlation can do it juſtice. The following paraphraſe, perhaps, may repreſent the principal ideas comprehended in the expreſſive original.—Who has branched out, and with admirable judgment diſpoſed a variety of aqueducts; for that immanſe collection of waters, which float in the ſky? Who diſtributes thoſe pendulous floods, thro' all the borders of the earth? Diſtributes them, not in dreadful cataracts, or promiſcuous gluts of rain; but in kindly drops, and reſreſhing ſhowers; with as much regularity and oeconomy, as if they were conveyed by pipes from a conduit?—To whom ſhall we aſcribe that niceneſs of contrivance, which now emits, now reſtrains them; ſometimes derives their humid train to one place, ſometimes to another; diſpenſes them to this ſoil in larger, to that in ſmaller communications; and, in a word, ſo manages the mighty fluid, that every ſpot is ſupplied in exact proportion to its wants, and none deſtroyed by an undiſtinguiſhing deluge?

† Perhaps, it was from ſuch an obſervation, that the Greeks, thoſe critical and refined judges of things, expreſſed the mundane ſyſtem by a word which ſignifies beauty—

The whole scene exhibits a fund of pleasures to the imagination; at the same time, that it more than supplies all our wants †.

THEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that rebellest against thy Maker. He furrounds thee, with unnumbered benefits; and follows thee, with an effusion of the richest, noblest gifts. He courts thy affections; he solicits thy gratitude; by liberalities which are never intermitted, by a bounty which knows no limits.—O! most blessed Lord, let this thy goodness, thy unwearied goodness, lead us to repentance. Win us to thyself, thou fountain of felicity, by these sweet inducements. Draw us to our duty, thou God of our salvation, by these “cords of love.”

WHAT a living picture is here, of the beneficial effects of industry! by industry and cultivation, this neat spot is an image of Eden. Here, is all that can entertain the eye, or * regale the smell: whereas, without cultivation, this sweet garden had been a desolated wilderness; vile thistles had made it loathsome, and tangling briars inaccessible. Without cultivation, it might have been a nest for serpents, and the horrid haunt of venomous creatures. But, the spade and pruning-knife, in the hand of industry, have improved it into a sort of terrestrial paradise.

How

† “Those several living creatures, which are made for our service or sustenance, at the same time either fill the woods with their music, furnish us with game, or raise pleasing ideas in us by the delightfulness of their appearance. Fountains, lakes, and rivers, are as refreshing to the imagination, as to the soil through which they pass.”

Spect. Vol. V. No. 387.

* Omnis copia narium.

HOR.

How naturally does this lead our contemplation, to the advantages, that flow from a virtuous education; and the miseries, that ensue from the § neglect of it!——The mind, without early institution, must, in all probability, become like the “vine-yard of the sluggard.” If left to the propensities of its own depraved will; what can we expect, but a most luxuriant growth of unruly appetites; which, in time, will break forth into all manner of scandalous irregularities? What?—but that Anger, like a prickly thorn, arm the temper with an untractable moroseness: Peevishness, like a stinging nettle, render the conversation forbidding: Avarice, like some choking weed, teach the fingers to gripe, and the hands to oppress: Revenge, like some poisonous plant, replete with baneful juices, rankle in the breast, and meditate mischief to its neighbour: while unbridled Lusts, like swarms of noisome insects, taint each rising thought; and render “every imagination of the heart only evil continually.”—Such, are the usual products of savage nature. Such, the furniture of the uncultivated soul!

WHEREAS let the mind be put under the “nurture and admonition of the LORD.” Let a holy discipline clear the soil: let sacred instructions sow it with the best seed: let skill and vigilance dress the rising shoots; direct the young ideas, how to spread; the way-ward passions, how to move:—then, what a different state of the inner man will quickly take place? Charity will breathe her sweets, and Hope expand her blossoms: the personal virtues display their graces, and the social ones their fruits: the

§ Neglectis urenda filix innascitur agris.

HOR.

the * sentiments become generous; the carriage endearing; the life honourable and useful †.

O! THAT governors of families, and masters of schools, would watch, with a conscientious solicitude, over the morals of their tender charge! What pity it is, that the advancing generation should lose these invaluable endowments, through any supineness in their instructors!—See! with what assiduity, the curious florist attends his little nursery; visits them early and late; furnishes them with the properest mould; supplies them with seasonable moistures; guards them from the ravages of insects; screens them from the injuries of the weather; marks their springing buds; observes them attentively, through their whole progress; and never intermits his anxiety, till he beholds them blown into full perfection.—And, shall a range of painted leaves, that flourish to-day, and to-morrow fall to the ground—shall these be tended, with more zealous application, than the noble faculties of an immortal soul?

YET

* This transformation of the heart, and renewal of the life, are represented in scripture, by similitudes, very nearly allied to the Images used above;—God, by his sanctifying Spirit, “will make the soul as a watered garden.” Under the operation of this divine principle, “the desert shall rejoice, “and blossom as the rose.” Wherever it exerts the refining and enobling energy, “instead of the thorn, shall come up “the fir-tree; and instead of the briar, the myrtle-tree.” Jerem. xxxi. 12. Isai. xxxv. 1. Isai. iv. 13.

† ———A teneris affuescere tanti est! VIRG.

———*ὅτι γὰρ μικρὸν διαφέρει, το πρὸς ἢ πρὸς εὐθυ:τ ἐκ νεῶν ἐθ.ζοθαι, ἀλλὰ πλεον, μάλλον δὲ το πᾶν.* Aristot. The principles we imbibe, and the habits we contract, in our early years, are not matters of small moment, but of the utmost consequence imaginable. They not only give a transient, or superficial tincture, to our first appearance in life; but most commonly stamp the form of our whole future conduct, and even of our eternal state.

YET trust not in cultivation alone; 'tis the blessing of the almighty husbandman, that imparts success to such labours of love. If God "seal
 " up the bottles of heaven," and commands the clouds to withhold their fatness, the best manured plot becomes a barren desert. And, if he restrain the dew of his heavenly benediction, all human endeavours miscarry; the rational plantation languishes; and our most pregnant hopes, from youths of the most promising genius, prove abortive. " Their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom will go up as dust" *.—Therefore, let parents plant; let tutors water; but, let both look up to the Father of spirits, for the desired increase.

ON every side, I spy several budding flowers. As yet they are closely convolved, and wrapt within a strong inclosure. All their beauties lie concealed, and their sweets locked up.—Just such is the niggardly wretch; whose aims are all turned inward, and meanly terminated upon himself: who makes his own private interests, or personal pleasures, the sole centre of his designs, and the scanty circumference of all his actions.

But, ere-long, the searching beams will open these silken folds, and draw them into a graceful expansion. Then, what a lovely blush will glow in their cheeks; and what a balmy odour exhale from their bosoms——so, when divine grace shines upon the mind, even the churl becomes bountiful: the heart of stone is taken away; and a heart of flesh, a heart susceptible of the softest, most compassionate emotions, is introduced in its stead. O! how sweetly do the social affections dilate themselves under so benign an influence! Just like these disclosing gems, under the powerful eye of day. The tender regards are no longer confined to a single object; but extend themselves into a generous
 concern

* Isai. v. 24.

concern for mankind, and shed liberal refreshments on all within their reach †.

ARISE then thou Sun of Righteousness; arise with healing under thy wings; and transfuse thy gentle, but penetrating ray, thro' all our intellectual powers. Inlarge every narrow disposition, and fill us with a diffusive benevolence. Make room in our breasts, for the whole human race; and teach us to love all our fellow-creatures, for their amiable Creator's sake. May we be pleased with their excellencies, and rejoice at their happiness; but feel their miseries as our own, and, with a brother's sympathy, hasten to relieve them!

DISPOSED at proper distances, I observed a range of strong and stately stalks. They stand like towers along the walls of a fortified city; or rise like lofty spires, amidst a group of houses. They part at the top, into several pensile spiky pods; from each of which will be excluded, within a little time, a fine figure, of a very peculiar and instructive character; rounded into a form, that constitutes a perfect circle; spread wide open, into the most frank and communicative air; tinged with the colour, which, of all others, most captivates the miser's eye.

BUT, the property I chiefly admire, is its passionate fondness for the Sun. When evening with
her

† How beautiful is the idea, and how significant the expression, in that fine passage of the prophet; where describing the charitable temper, he says—'If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry!'—which, I think, may very properly be illustrated by the circumstances observed above. The opening of these buds into a large and extensive spread, is a pretty portrait of the amplitude of a generous heart; which cannot shut its compassion, or remain unconcerned at any human calamity. The freeness and copiousness, with which their choicest essences, their aromatic souls, are continually poured out; may represent, not only the various acts of an unwearied liberality; but also that cordial affection, and yearning tenderness, with which they are bestowed. *Isai. lviii. 10.*

her shades comes on, the poor flower droops, and folds up its leaves. It mourns all the long night, like some forlorn lover, for the absence of the light. No sooner does Providence open "the eye-lids of the morning;" but immediately it * addresses itself, to the object of its affection; courts and caresses it all the day; nor ever loses sight of the refulgent charmer, so long as he continues above the horizon.—In the morning you may perceive it, presenting a golden bosom to the east; at noon, it points upward, to the middle sky; in the evening, follows the same attractive influence to the west.

SURELY, Nature is a book, and every page rich with sacred hints. To an attentive mind, the garden turns preacher; and its blooming tenants are so many lively sermons. What an engaging pattern, and what an excellent lesson, have we here! —so, let the redeemed of the LORD look unto JESUS †, and be conformed to their beloved. Let us all be Heliotropes (if I may use the expression) to the Sun of Righteousness. Let our passions rise and fall; take this Course or that; as his word determines, as his holy example guides. Let us be so accommodated, both to his commanding and providential will, as the wax is turned to the imprinting seal; or as the aspect of this enamoured flower to the splendid star which creates our day.

IN every Enjoyment, O thou watchful christian, look unto JESUS, receive it as proceeding from his love, and purchased by his agonies †.—In every
Tribulation

* —Illa suum, quamvis Radice tenetur,
Vertitur ad Solem.—

OVID.

† Heb. xii. 2.

‡ He sunk beneath our heavy woes,
To raise us to his throne:

'There's not a gift his hand bestows,
'But cost his heart a groan.'

WATTS.

Tribulation look unto JESUS; mark his gracious hand, managing the scourge; or mingling the bitter cup; attempering it to a proper degree of Severity; adjusting the time of its continuance; and ready to make these seeming disasters, productive of real good.—In every Infirmary and Failing, look unto JESUS, thy merciful High-Priest; pleading his atoning blood, and making intercession for transgressors.—In every Prayer look unto JESUS thy prevailing advocate; recommending thy devotions, and “bearing the iniquity of thy holy things †.”—In every Temptation look unto JESUS, the author of thy strength, and captain of thy salvation, who alone is able to lift up the hands that hang down, to invigorate the enfeebled knees, and make thee more than conqueror over all thy enemies.—But especially, when the hour of thy departure approaches; when “thy flesh and thy heart fail;” when all the springs of life are irreparably breaking; then look unto JESUS, with a believing eye *. Like expiring Stephen, behold him standing at the right hand of God, on purpose to succour his people, in this their last extremity. Yes, my christian friend, when the journey through life is finished, and thou art arrived on the very verge of mortality; when thou art just launching out into the invisible world, and all before thee is vast eternity; then, O then, be sure to look stedfastly unto JESUS! “See by Faith the LORD’s “CHRIST.” View him, as the only Way ‡, to the everlasting mansions; as the only Door, || to the abodes of bliss.

YONDER tree, that faces the south, has something too remarkable, to pass without observation.

—Like

† Exod. xxviii. 38.

* Look unto ME, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. Isai. xlv. 22.

‡ John xiv. 6.

|| John xiv. 6.

—Like the fruitful, tho' feeble vine, she brings forth a large family of branches: but unable to support them herself, commits them to the tuition of a sunny wall. As yet, the tender twigs have scarce gemmed their future blossoms. However, I may anticipate the well known productions; and picture to myself the Passion-flower; which will, in due time, with a long and copious succession, adorn the boughs.

I HAVE read, in a profane author, of flowers inscribed with the names of kings †: but here is one, emblazoned with the marks of the bleeding Prince of life. I read, in the inspired writings of apostolic men; who bore about, in their bodies the Dying of the LORD JESUS §: but, here is a *blooming religioso*, that carries apparent memorials, of the same tremendous and fatal catastrophe, — Who would have expected to find such a tragedy of woe, exhibited in a collection of the most delicate delights? Or, to see Calvary's horrid scene, pourtrayed on the softest ornaments of the garden? — Is nature then actuated by the noble ambition, of paying commemorative honours, to her agonizing Sovereign? Is she kindly officious to remind forgetful mortals, of that miracle of mercy, which it is their duty to contemplate, and their happiness to believe? — Or, is a sportive imagination my interpreter: and all the supposed resemblance, no more than the precarious glass of fancy? Be it so: yet even fancy has her merit, when she sets forth, in such pleasing imagery, the crucified JESUS. Nor should I refuse a willing regard, to imagination herself; when she employs her creative powers to revive the sense of such unparalleled love, and prompt my gratitude to so divine a friend.

THAT

† Dic, quibus in Terris inscripti Nomina Regum
Nascantur Flores? —

VITAC.

§ 2 Cor. iv. 10.

THAT spiral Tendril, arising from the bottom of the Stalk; is it a representation of the Scourge, which lashed the Redeemer's unspotted flesh; and inflicted those stripes, by which our souls are healed? Or, is it twisted for the Cord, which bound his hands, in painful and ignominious confinement: those beneficent hands, which were incessantly stretched out to unloose the heavy burthens, and to impart blessings of every choice kind?—Behold the Nails which were drenched in his sacred Veins, and rivetted his feet to the accursed tree: those beautiful* feet, which always went about doing good; and travelled far and near, to spread the glad tidings of everlasting salvation.—See the Hammer, ponderous and massy, that drove the rugged irons through the racked nerves; that forced a passage for those dreadful wedges, between the dislocated bones:—View the Thorns, which encircled our Royal Master's brows, and shot their keen afflictive points into his blessed head: that head which was ever meditating peace to poor sinners: and spent many a wakeful night in ardent prayer for their happiness. O the smart! the fiercely throbbing smart! when, instead of the triumphant laurel; or the odoriferous garland, that pungent and ragged wreath, was planted on the meek Messiah's forehead! When rude and barbarous blows of the strong eastern cane †, struck the prickly crown, and fixed

* ‘How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation!’ *Isai. lii. 7.*

† ‘They took the reed,’ says the sacred historian, ‘and smote him on the head!’ ‘and so, as it were, nailed down the thorns into his forehead and temples, and occasioned thereby exquisite pain, as well as a great effusion of blood.’
—*Family Expositor, Vol. II. Sect. 188.*—“It is most probable, adds the same judicious critic, this was a walking-staff, which they put into his hand as a sceptre; for a
“ blow

fixed every thorn deep in his tender temples *1—
There stand the Disciples ranged in the green impalement; and forming a circle, round the instruments of their great commander's torture. They stand wedged in firm battalion; appear like so many faithful adherents, that breathe a gallant resolution; either of defending their Lord to the last extremity, or of dropping, in honourable deaths, by his side. O! that they had giving such proofs of zeal and fidelity in their conduct, as their steady posture, and determined aspect, seem to promise! But, alas! what is human firmness, when destitute of succours from above, but an expiring vapour? What is every saint, if unsupported by powerful grace, but an abandoned traitor?—Observe the Glory, delineated in rays of imperial purple. But ah! how incapable are threads, though spun by Summer's finest hand; though dyed in snows, or dipped in heaven; to display the immaculate excellency of his human, or the ineffable majesty of his divine nature! Compared with these sublime perfections, the most vivid assemblage of colours fades into an unmeaning flatness; the most charming effects of light and shade are not only mere daubings, but an absolute blank.

AMONG

“ blow with a slight reed would scarce have been felt, or have deserved a mention in a detail of such dreadful sufferings.”

* The smart, attending this unparalleled piece of contemptuous barbarity, must be inexpressibly severe: not only, on account of the many painful punctures made in the flesh; but principally, because the periosteum, a most exquisitely sensible tegument of the bones: lying, in those parts, very near the external skin; must receive a multitude of most terrible wounds. The anguish of which could not fail of being inflamed to an excess of rage, by the continuance of so many thorny lancets, in that extremely tender membrane; which, in such a Case,

——trembling alive all o'er,
Must smart and agonize at ev'ry pore,

AMONG all the beauties, that shine in sunny robes, and sip the silver dews; this, I think, has the noblest import, if not the finest presence. Were they all to pass in review, and expect the award of superiority from my decision; I should not hesitate a moment. Be the prize assigned to this amiable candidate; which has so eminently distinguished, and so highly dignified herself, by bearing such a remarkable resemblance to “The Righteous Branch ||: The Plant of renown.”—While others appoint it a place in the Parterre; I would transplant the Passion flower, or rather transfer its sacred significance, to my heart. There let it bloom, both in Summer and in Winter; bloom, in the most impressive characters, and with an undecaying lustre. That I also may wear—wear on my very soul, the traces of Immanuel; pierced for my sins, and bruised for my transgressions. That I also may be crucified with Christ †; at least in penitential remorse, and affectionate sympathy. That I may know the fellowship of his sufferings §; and feel all my evil affections wounded by his agonies, mortified by his death.

There is another subject of the verdant kingdom, which makes so very uncommon a figure, as justly claims my particular notice. One, so extremely diffident in her disposition, and delicate in her constitution, that she dares not venture herself abroad in the open air: but is nursed up in the warmth of a hot-bed, and lives cloistered in the cells of a green-house.—But the most curious peculiarity is, that of all her kindred species, she alone partakes of perceptive life; at least, advances nearest to this more exalted state of being; and may be looked on as the link, which connects the animal and

|| So the blessed Jesus is described Jer. xxiii. 5. Ezek. xxxiv. 29.

† Gal. ii. 20.

§ Phil. iii. 10.

and the vegetable world. A stranger, observing her qualities, would almost be induced to suspect; that she is indued with some inferior degrees of consciousness and caution. For, if you offer to handle this Sensitive Plant, she immediately takes the alarm; hastily contracts her fibres; and like a person under apprehensions of violence, withdraws from your finger, in a kind of precipitate disorder. Perhaps the beauty of her aspect might be sullied, or the niceness of her texture discomposed, by the human touch. Therefore, like a coy virgin, she keeps at a distance, from all unbecoming familiarities; and will admit no such improper, if not pernicious, freedoms.

WHATEVER be the cause of this unusual effect; it suggests an instructive admonition, to the christian. Such should be our apprehensive, timorous care, with regard to sin; and all, even the most distant approaches of vice. We should avoid the very appearance of evil, and stand aloof from every occasion of falling.—If sinners entice; if forbidden pleasures tempt; or if opportunity beckon with the gain of injustice in her hand; turn from the gilded snare; touch not the beautiful bane; but fly, fly with haste, fly without any delay, from the bewitching ruin.—Does anger draw near with her lighted torch, to kindle the flame of resentment in our breasts? Does flattery ply our ears with her enchanting and intoxicating whispers? Would discontent lay her leading hand upon our tempers, and mould into our minds her sour leaven; in order to make us a burden to ourselves, and unamiable to others? Instantly let us divert our attention from the dangerous objects; and not so much endeavour to antidote, as to shun the moral contagion. Let us revolve, in our meditations, that wonderful meekness of our distressed Master; which, amidst the most abusive and provoking insults, maintained an uniform tenor of unshaken serenity. Let us contemplate that prodigious humiliation; which

L brought

brought him from an infinite height above all worlds, to make his bed in the dust of death. Let us sooth our jarring, our uneasy passions, by an attentive reflection on that cheerfulness and resignation; which rendered him, in the deepest poverty, unfeignedly thankful; and under the heaviest tribulations, most submissively patient.

HARBOUR not, therefore, on any consideration, the betrayer of our virtue. Be deaf, inflexibly deaf, to the beguiling sollicitation. If it obtrude into the unguarded heart; give it entertainment, no, not for a moment. To parly with the enemy, is to open a door for destruction. Our safety consists in flight: and, in this case, suspicion is the truest prudence; fear, the greatest bravery.—Play not on the brink of the precipice. Flutter not round the edges of the flame. Dally not with the stings of death. But reject, with a becoming mixture of solicitude and abhorrence, the very first insinuations of iniquity: as cautiously, as the smarting sore shrinks even from the softest hand; as constantly as this jealous plant recoils at the approaching touch*.

NOT

* The Prophet Isaiah, in an elegant and lively description of the upright man, says, he shaketh his hands from holding of bribes; and I may add, from practising any kind of iniquity. The image, exceedingly beautiful, and equally expressive, both illustrates and enforces the doctrine of this whole section. —Shaketh his hands; just as a person would do, who happens to have burning coals fall into his lap, or some venomous creature fastening upon his flesh. In such a case, none would stand a moment to consider; none would debate with himself, the expediency of the things; but, instantly fling off the pernicious incumbrance; instantly endeavour to disengage himself, from the clinging mischief.—Isai. xxxiii. 13.

I have represented the danger of not smothering immediately the very first sparks of temptation, in a variety of views. Because, a proper behaviour, in this conjuncture, is of such vast importance to the purity, the safety, and the comfort

Not long ago, these curious productions of the spring were coarse and mis-shapen roots. Had we opened the earth, and beheld them in their seed; how uncouth and contemptible, had their appearance been;—but now, they are the boast of nature; the delight of the sons of men; finished patterns for enameling and embroidery; outshining even the happiest strokes of the pencil. They are taught to bloom, but with a very inferior lustre †, in the richest tapestries, and most magnificent silks. Art never attempts to equal their incomparable elegancies; but places all her merit, in copying after these delicate originals. Even those that glitter in silver, or whose cloathing is of wrought gold; are proud to borrow additional ornaments, from a sprig of jessamine, or a little assemblage of pinks.

WHAT a fine idea may we form from hence, of the Resurrection of the Just, and the state of their re-animated bodies! As, the roots even of our choicest Flowers, when deposited in the ground, are rude and ungraceful; but, when they spring up into blooming life, are most exquisitely elegant; so, the poor flesh of a Saint, when committed to the dust, alas! what is it? A heap of corruption; a mass of putrefying clay. But, when it obeys the

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great

comfort of our minds.——Because, I had the royal moralist in my eye; who, deterring his pupils from the path of the wicked, cries, with an air of deep concern, and in the language of vehement importunity, cries: avoid it; pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away. How strongly is the counsel urged, by being so frequently repeated, in such a remarkable diversity of concise and abrupt, consequently of forcible and pressing admonitions! Prov. iv. 15.

† The cowslip smiles in brighter yellow drest,
Than that which veils the nubile virgin's breast:
A fairer red stands blushing in the rose,
Than that which on the bridegroom's vestment flows.

PRICE'S Solom.

great archangel's call, and starts into renewed existence; O! what an astonishing change ensues! What a most prodigious improvement takes place!—That which was sown in weakness, will be raised in all the vivacity of power. That which was sown in deformity will be raised in the bloom of celestial beauty; and shine “as the brightness of “the firmament,” when it darts the inimitable blue, through the fleeces—the snowy fleeces of some cleaving cloud.

FEAR not, then, thou faithful christian; fear not at the appointed time, to descend into the tomb. Thy soul thou mayst trust with thy omnipotent Redeemer, who is LORD of the unseen world; “who “has the keys of hell, and of death.” Most safely mayst thou trust thy better part, in those beneficent hands, which were pierced with nails, and fastened to the ignominious tree, for thy salvation—and, with regard to thy fleshly tabernacle, be not dismayed; it is only taken down, to be rebuilt upon a diviner plan, and in a more heavenly form. If it retire into the shadow of death, and gloom of the grave: it is only to return from a short confinement, to endless liberty. If it dies, it is in order to rise more illustrious from its ruins; and wear an infinitely brighter face, of perfection, and of glory*.

HAVING, now, made my panegyric; let me, next, take up a lamentation; for these sweetest productions of the vegetable world.—For, I foresee their approaching doom: yet a little while, and all these pleasing scenes vanish: yet a little while, and all the sweets of the breathing, all the beauties of the blooming spring, perish. Every one of these
amiable

* The Wise, the Just, the Pious, and the Brave,
Live in their Deaths, and flourish from the Grave,
Grain hid in Earth repays the Peasant's Care;
And Ev'ning Suns but set to rise more fair.

amiable forms must be shrivelled to deformity, and trodden to the earth.—Significant resemblance this, of all created beauty. All flesh is grass; saith the prophetic voice, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. Behold, then, ye brightest among the daughters of Eve; behold yourselves in this glass. See the charms of your person eclipsed, by the lustre of these little flowers; and the frailty of your state represented, * by their transient glories.

* Και το ροδον καλον εστι, και ο χρονος αυτο μαραινει·
Και το ιον καλον εστιν εν ειχαρι, και ταχυ γηραι·
Λευκον το κρινον εστι, μαραινεται ανικα πιπλη·
Α δε χιων λευκα, και ταχεται ανικα παχθη·
Και καλλος καλον εστι το παιδικον αλλ ολιγον ζη.

THEOCR. Idyl. 24.

When Snows descend, and robe the Fields,
In Winter's bright Array;
Touch'd by the Sun, the Lustre fades,
And weeps itself away.

When Spring appears; when Violets blow,
And shed a rich Perfume;
How soon the Fragrance breathes its last!
How short-liv'd is the Bloom!

Fresh in the Morn, the Summer Rose,
Hangs wither'd ere 'tis Noon:
We scarce enjoy the balmy Gift,
But mourn the Pleasure gone.

With gliding Fire, an Ev'ning Star
Streaks the Autumnal Skies;
Shook from its Seat it darts away,
And, in an Instant, dies.

Such are the Charms, that flush the cheeks,
And sparkle in the Eye:
So, from the lovely finish'd Form
The transient Graces fly.

To

glories. A fever may scorch those polished veins; a consumption emaciate the dimpling cheeks; a load of unexpected sorrows depress those lively spirits. Or; if these disasters, in pity, spare the tender frame; yet age, inexorable age and wrinkles, will come at last; will wither the fine features, and blast every sprightly grace.

THEN, ye fair, when those sparkling eyes are darkened, and sink in their orbs; when they are rolling in agonies, or swimming in death—how will you sustain the affliction; how will you repair the loss?—Oh! apply your thoughts to religion; choose and attend to the one thing needful. Believe in, and imitate the blessed Jesus: then shall your souls mount up to the realms of happiness; when the well-proportioned clay is mingling with its mean original. The bright beams of God's countenance will irradiate, with a matchless perfection, all their faculties. Cleansed entirely from every dreg of corruption, like some unsullied mirror, they will reflect the complete image of their Creator's holiness.—O! that you would thus dress your minds, and prepare for the immortal state! Then, from shining among your fellow-creatures on earth, you shall be translated, to shine around the throne of God, for ever and ever. Then, from being the sweeteners of our life, and the delight of our eyes, here below, you shall pass, by an easy transition, into angels of light; and becoming “an everlasting excellency, the joy of all generations.”

Yes; ye flowery nations, ye must all decay.—Yonder Lily, that looks like the queen of the gay creation—See, how gracefully it erects its majestic head! What an air of dignity and grandeur enobles

To this the Seasons, as they roll,
Their Attestation bring:
They warm the Fair; their ev'ry Round
Confirms the truth I sing

bles its aspect! For elevated mein, as well as incomparable lustre; justly may it be preferred to the magnificent monarch of the east*. But, all stately and charming as it is, it will hardly survive a few more days: that unspotted whiteness must quickly be tarnished; and the snowy form defiled in the dust.

As the Lily pleases, with the noble simplicity of its appearance; the Tulip is admired, for the gaiety and multiplicity of its colours. What a profusion of dyes arrays its painted cup! Its tinges are so glowing; its contrasts so strong; and the arrangement of them both, so elegant and artful!—'Twas lately the pride of the border, and the reigning beauty of the delightful season. As exquisitely fine as the rainbow, and almost as extremely transient; it spread, for a little moment, its glittering plumage: but has, now, laid all its distinguished honours down. Those radiant stripes are blended, alas! rudely blended, with common mould.

To a graceful shape, and blooming complexion, the rose adds the most agreeable perfume. Our nostrils make it repeated visits, and are never weary of drinking its sweets. A fragrance, so peculiarly rich and reviving, transpires from its opening tufts; that every one covets its acquaintance. How have I seen even the accomplished Clarissa, for whom so many votaries languish, fondly caressing this little flower! That lovely bosom, which is the seat of innocence and virtue; whose least excellency it is, to rival the delicacy of the purest snows; among a thousand charms of its own, thinks it possible to adopt another from the damask rose-bud.—Yet even this universal favourite must fail. Its native balm cannot preserve it from putrefaction. Soon, soon must it resign all those endearing qualities; and hang neglected on its stem, or drop despised to the ground.

ONE

* Mat. vi. 29.

ONE could wish, methinks, these loveliest of the inanimate race, a longer existence: but in vain: They fade, almost as soon as they flourish: Within less than a month, their glories are extinct. Let the sun take a few more journeys through the sky; then, visit this enchanting walk; and you will find nothing, but a wretched wilderness of ragged or naked stalks.—But O! (My soul exults in the thought) the garment of celestial glory, which shall ere-long array the re-animated body, will never wax old. The illustrious robes of a Saviour's consummate righteousness, which are appointed to deck the justified spirit, are incorruptible and immortal. No moth can corrode their texture; no number of ages sully their brightness. The light of day may be quenched, and all the stars sink in obscurity; but, the honours of “Just men, made perfect,” are subject to no diminution: inextinguishable and unfading, is the lustre of their crown.

Yes; ye flowery nations, ye must all decay.—Winter, like some enraged and irresistible conqueror, that carries fire and sword, where-ever he advances, demolishes towns; depopulates countries; spreads slaughter and desolation on every side—So, just so, will winter, with his savage and unrelenting blasts, invade this beautiful prospect. The storms are gathering, and the tempests mustering their rage, to fall upon these vegetable kingdoms. They will ravage through the dominions of nature; and plunder her riches, and lay waste her charms.—Then, ye trees, must ye stand stript of your verdant apparel; and ye, fields, be spoiled of your waving treasures. Then, the earth, disrobed of all her gay attire, must sit in sables, like a disconsolate widow: The sun too, that now rides in triumph round the world, and scatters gaiety from his radiant eye, will then look faintly from the windows
of

of the south; and, casting a short glance on our dejected world, will leave us the uncomfortable gloom of tedious nights.—Then, these pretty choiristers of the air will chant no more to the gentle gales. The Lark, the Linnet, and all the feathered songsters, abandon their notes, and indulge their woes. Mute is every shrill and tuneful pipe: the harmony of the woods is at an end: and silence, (unless interrupted by howling Winds) fullen silence, sits brooding upon the boughs; that are now made vocal, by a thousand warbling throats.

BUT, O! ravishing remembrance! the songs of saints in light never admit a pause for sadness. All heaven will resound with the melody of their gratitude, and all eternity echo to their triumphant acclamations. The Hallelujahs of that world; and the harmonious Joy of its Inhabitants; will be as lasting, as the divine Perfections they celebrate.—Come then, holy love, and tune my heart; descend, celestial fire, and touch my tongue; that I may stand ready to strike up, and bear my part, in that great hosanna, that everlasting hymn.

YES; yes; ye flowery nations, ye must all decay—And, indeed, could you add the strength of an oak, or the stability of a pyramid †, to all the delicacy

† I know not any performance, in which the transitory nature of these most durable monuments of human grandeur, is hinted with such a modest air of instruction; or their hideous ruin described, in such a pomp of pleasing horror; as in a small, but solemn, picturesque, and majestic poem intitled—THE RUINS OF ROME, written by the Rev. Mr. DYER; whom the reader (if he has the pleasure of perusing that beautiful piece) will easily perceive to have drawn from the originals themselves; as nothing but the sight of those magnificent remains, could have inspired his lines with such vivacity.—As a specimen of the work, and a confirmation of the remark suggested above, I take leave to transcribe the following lines;

—The

delicacy of your texture; yet short, exceeding short even then, would your duration be. For, I see, that all things come to an end. The pillars of nature are tottering; the foundations of the round world are falling away: "The heavens themselves wax old like a garment."—But, amidst these views of general ruin, here is our refuge; this our consolation; 'we know that our Redeemer liveth.' Thy years, blessed Jesus, shall not fail; from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art still the same; the same most excellent and adorable being; the same omnipotent and faithful friend; the same all-sufficient and inestimable portion. O! may we but partake of thy merits; be sanctified by thy grace; and received into thy glory!—Then, perish if ye will, all inferior delights. Let all that is splendid in the skies expire; and all that is amiable in nature be expunged. Let the whole extent of creation be turned again into one undistinguishable void; one universal blank:—Yet, if God be ours, we shall have enough: If God be ours, we shall have all, and abound †: All that our circumstances can want, or our wishes crave to make us inconceivably blessed and happy: blessed and happy, not only through this little interval of time, but through the unmeasurable revolutions of eternity.

THE sun, is now come forth in his strength; and beats fiercely upon my throbbing pulse.—Let me retire to yonder inviting harbour. There, the
Woodbines

—The pilgrim oft,
At dead of night, mid his oraison hears
Aghast the voice of time, disparting tow'rs,
Tumbling all precipitate down dash'd
Rattling around, loud thund'ring to the moon.
‡ His hand the good Man fastens on the skies,
And bids earth roll, nor feels the idle whirl.

Night-Thoughts, No. IV.

Woodbines retain the lucid drop and the Jessamines, that line the verdant alcove, are still impearled with dews.—Welcome, ye refreshing shades! I feel, I feel, your chearing influence. My languid spirits revive; the slackened sinews are new-strung; and life bounds brisker, through all her crimson channels.

RECLINED on this mossy couch; and surrounded by this fragrant coolness; let me renew my aspirations, to the ever-present Deity. Here, let me remember, and imitate, the pious Augustine, and his mother Monica. Who, being engaged in discourse, on the beauties of the visible creation; rose by these ladders, to the glories, of the invisible state; till they were inspired with the most affecting sense, of their super-eminent excellency, and actuated with the most ardent breathing, after their full enjoyment. Inasmuch, that they were almost wrapt up into the bliss they contemplated; and “scarce knew, whether they were in the body, or “out of the body.”

WHEN tempests toss the ocean; when plaintive signals of distress are heard from the bellowing deep; and melancholy tokens of Shipwreck come floating on the foaming surge: then, how delightful to stand safe on shore, and hug one's self in conscious security †! When a glut of waters bursts from some mighty torrent; rushes headlong over all the neighbouring plains; sweeps away the helpless cattle; and drives the affrighted shepherd from his hut: then,

† As, Lucretius gave the hint for these observations; so, he assigns the reason of the pleasure specified. It arises, not from the consideration of another's misery: this would argue the rankest malevolence; but, from the agreeable contemplation of our own personal safety: which, while we view circumstances, that are pernicious to others, but harmless to ourselves, is not a little heightened by the contrast.—*Suave Mari magno, &c.*

then, from the top of a distant eminence, to descry the danger, we need not fear; how pleasing!—Such, methinks, is my present situation; for now, the sun blazes from on high: the air glows with his fire: the fields are rent with chinks: the roads are scorched to dust: the woods seem to contract a sickly aspect, and a ruflet hue: the traveller, broiled as he rides, hastens to his inn, and intermits his journey: the labourer, bathed in sweat, drops the scythe, and desists from his work: the cattle flee to some shady covert, or else pant and toss under the burning noon. Even the stubborn rock, smit with the piercing beam, is ready to cleave. All things languish, beneath the dazzling deluge—While I shall enjoy a cool hour, and calm reflection; amidst the gloom of this bowery recess, that scarce admits one speck of sun shine.

Thus, may both the flock, and their shepherd, “ dwell beneath the defence of the Most High, and “ abide under the shadow of the Almighty †.” Then, though † the pestilence walketh in darkness, and the sickness destroyeth at noon-day, though thousands fall beside us, and ten thousands at our right-hand; we need fear no evil. Either the destroying angel shall pass over our houses; or else, he shall dispense the corrections of a friend, not the scourges of an enemy; which, instead of hurting us, shall work for our good.—Then, though Profaneness and Infidelity, far more malignant evils, breathe deadly contagion, and taint the morals of multitudes around us; yet, if the Great Father of spirits “ hide us in the hollow of his hand,” we shall hold fast our integrity, and be faithful unto death.

LET then, dearest Lord, O! let thy servant, and the people committed to his care, be received into
thy

† Psalm xci. 1.

† This was written, when a very infectious and mortal distemper raged in the neighbourhood.

thy protection. Let us take sanctuary under that tree of life, erected in thy ignominious cross; let us fly for safety to that city of refuge, opened in thy bleeding wounds. These shall be a sacred hiding-place, not to be pierced by the flames of divine wrath, or the fiery darts of temptation. Thy dying merits, and perfect obedience, shall be to our souls, “as rivers of water in a dry place, or “as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” †

But most of all, in that last tremendous day, when the heavens are rent asunder, and wrapt up like a scroll: when thy Almighty Arm shall arrest the sun in his career, and dash to pieces the structure of the universe; when the dead, both small and great, shall be gathered before the throne of thy glory; and the fates of all mankind hang on the very point of a final irreversible decision:—Then, blessed JESUS, let us be owned by thee, and we shall not be ashamed: defended by thee, and we shall not be afraid. O! may we, at that awful, that unutterably important juncture, be covered with the wings of thy redeeming love; and we shall behold all the horrible convulsions of expiring nature, with composure, with comfort! We shall even welcome the consummation of all things, as the “Times of refreshing from the presence of the “Lord” ‡.

THERE are, I perceive, who still attend the flowers; and, in defiance of the sun, ply their work on every expanded blossom. The Bees, I mean, that nation of chymists! To whom nature has communicated the rare and valuable secret, of enriching themselves, without impoverishing others. Who extract the most delicious syrup, from every fragrant herb; without wounding its substance, or diminishing its odours. I take the more notice of these ingenious operators; because, I would wil-

lingly

† Isai. xxxii. 2.

‡ Acts iii. 19.

lingly make them my pattern §. While the gay butterfly flutters her painted wings; and sips a little fantastic delight, only for the present moment, while the gloomy spider, worse than idly busied: is preparing his insidious nets for destruction; or sucking venom even from the most wholesome plants: this frugal community are wisely employed in providing for futurity; and collecting a copious stock, of the most balmy treasures.—And O! might these meditations sink into my soul! would the God, who suggested each heavenly thought, vouchsafe to convert it into an established principle; to determine all my inclinations, and regulate my whole conduct; I should, then, gather advantages from the same blooming objects; more precious than your golden stores, ye industrious artists. I also should go home laden with the richest sweets, and noblest spoils; though I crop not a leaf, nor call a single flower my own.

HERE I behold, assembled, in one view, almost all the various beauties, that have been severally entertaining my imagination. The Vistas, struck through an antient wood, or formed by rows of venerable elms; conducting the spectator's observation, to some amiable object; or leading the traveller's footsteps, to this delightful seat:—The walls, enriched with fruit-trees, and faced with a covering of their leafy extensions; I should rather have said, hung with different pieces of nature's noblest tapestry:—The walks, neatly shorn, and lined with verdure; or finely smoothed, and coated with gravel:—The alleys, arched with shades, to embower our noon-tide repose; or thrown open for the free accession of air, to invite us to our evening

§ —Ego apis matinae
More modoque
Grata carpentis thyma.

HOR.

evening recreation:—The decent edgings of box, that inclose, like a plain selvage, each beautiful compartment, and its splendid figures:—The shapely evergreens, and flowering shrubs; that strike the eye, and appear with peculiar dignity in this distant situation:—The basin, with its crystal fount, floating in the centre; and diffusing an agreeable freshness through the whole:—The waters, falling from a remote cascade; and gently murmuring, as they flow along the pebbles:—These, added to the rest; and all so disposed, that each recommends and endears each; renders the whole a most sweet ravishing scene of order and variety, of elegance and magnificence.

FROM so many lovely prospects, clustering upon one's sight, it is impossible not to be reminded of heaven: that world of bliss; those regions of light; where the Lamb that was slain manifests his beatific presence, and his saints live for evermore.—But O! what pencil can sketch out a draught of that goodly land? What language expresses the incomparable splendors of Immanuel's kingdom? Would some celestial hand draw aside the veil, but for one moment; and permit us to throw a single glance on those divine abodes; how would all sublunary possessions become tarnished in our eyes, and grow flat upon our taste! One transient glimpse of those unutterable beatitudes would captivate our souls, and engross all their faculties. Eden itself, after such a vision, would appear a cheerless desert; and all earthly charms, intolerable deformity.

VERY excellent things are spoken of thee, thou city of God †. Volumes have been written, and those by inspired men, to display the wonders of thy perfections. All that is rich and resplendent in the visible creation has been called in to aid our conceptions,

† Psalm lxxxvii. 2.

ceptions, and elevate our ideas. But, indeed, no tongue can utter; no pen can describe; no fancy can imagine; what God, of his unbounded munificence, has prepared for them that love him.—

Seeing then, that all terrestrial things must come to a speedy end; and there remaineth such a rest, such a blissful and everlasting rest, for the people of God: let me never be too fondly attached, to any present satisfactions. Weaned from whatever is temporal, may I maintain a superior indifference, for such transitory enjoyments; but long, long earnestly for the mansions that are above; the paradise, “which the Lord hath planted, and not man.” Thither, may I transmit the chief of my conversation; and from thence, expect the whole of my happiness. Be that the sacred, powerful magnet, which ever influences my heart; ever attracts my affections. There are such transcendent glories, as eye has not seen: There are such transporting pleasures, as ear has not heard: There is such a fulness of joys, as the thought of man cannot conceive.

INTO that consummate felicity; those eternal fruitions, permit me, Madam, to wish you, in due time, an abundant entrance: and to assure you that this wish is breathed with the same sincerity and ardour for my honoured correspondent, as it is, Madam, for

• Your most obedient, &c.

J. HERVEY.



